# LEADING FROM WITHIN:

# Building Organizational Leadership Capacity

**Authored by:**

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**2014**

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# 7EADING FROM WITHIN:
# BUILDING ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

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# Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

So why another book on leadership? Literally, hundreds of books on this topic grace the shelves of bookstores and libraries. Communities across the nation offer annual training programs to improve civic leadership. Various state and local governments send their staff through leadership classes. Corporate training programs focus on leadership development. Leadership courses abound in adult education. And so on.

The premise of this book is that despite all the attention to leadership development, nonprofit community and economic development organizations and government agencies could benefit from a more directed and structured program to develop effective leaders within and throughout their organization and thereby improve the quality of their operation. Studies have consistently demonstrated that organizations that prioritize leadership development are much more effective in meeting the expectations of their constituents, stakeholders, and customers. It has been said that the better the leadership, the better the organization is able collectively to ride the challenges of difficult times.[1]

According to Bersin & Associates study entitled "High-Impact Leadership Development" (2008), an organizational focus on leadership development results in:

- Becoming 84 percent more effective at raising the quality of the leadership "pipeline;"
- A 73 percent increase in employee retention;
- A 67 percent increase in the ability of the organization's members to work collaboratively; and,
- A 66 percent improvement in the organization's results.

According to the 2008 IBM Global Human Capital Study, over 75 percent of the respondents identified building leadership talent as their current and

[1] Ken Sundheim, "Defining , Improving and Teaching Leadership With Those Who Know It Best, *Forbes.com*, 10/28/2013.

most significant capabilities challenge. Leaders today sometimes appear to be an endangered species. The second most important capacity building challenge facing organizations in this study was fostering a culture that supports learning and development. Clearly, these two key challenges are closely related.

> *Leadership, like the inner workings of a computer, is a complex set of relationships, systems, and processes that few fully master.* Dave Ulrich, Global Consulting Alliance.

Organizational life today is often a complex social environment of confrontation, miscommunication, manipulation, hostility, and conflict. Does that sound like an exaggeration to you? If so, take a good look at most organizations. So much of what takes place in virtually all organizations is grounded in the interrelationships of its members, and all human relationships have problems. These interactions involve the work that is done, the goals that are set, and the decisions that are made. Without effective leadership, members of an organization often quickly degenerate into argument and conflict, because they each see things in different ways and lean toward different solutions.

The core of the criticism of organizations in a lot of the literature is that all sorts of them (corporations, government agencies, and not-for-profit organizations) tend to be over-managed and under-led. Those organizations suffering from over-management tend to be slow to make necessary changes and therefore achieve less than what they could. In the organizations that are characterized by poor leadership, employees see very little that is positive. In a climate of distrust, employees learn that so-called leaders will act in ways that are not easily understood or that do not seem to be in the organization's best interests. Poor leadership leads to an abandonment of hope, which, if allowed to go on for too long, results in an organization becoming completely dysfunctional. The organization must then deal with the practical impact of unpleasant change, but more importantly, must labor under the burden of employees who have given up, and have no faith in the system or in the ability of leaders to turn the

organization around.[2] This is a substantial criticism that points to the importance of leadership.

Although most organizations would say that they are interested in becoming more effective and therefore more *excellent*, this is almost impossible without competent leadership. Barbara Blumenthal reported in her book *Investing in Capacity Building* that capacity-building interventions often fail if strong organizational leadership is not in place.[3] The government official, the agency manager, the economic developer, the Chamber executive, and all staff in this new knowledge-based environment will need to assume the role of active networker and facilitator, both within his or her organization and with stakeholders and constituents. Excellence means that top leadership does a number of things well, including creating a *learning organization* that trains and retains its talent. This is what it takes to achieve an organization that has a culture of character and integrity.

A primary concern of most organizations today is the attraction and retention of talented people. However, they generally want to work for good leaders in an open environment where they can speak their minds freely, be treated with respect, and where leadership promotes clarity and honesty. Bad leaders are corrosive to an organization because they can drive out anyone who's good. Unfortunately, since many bad leaders are manipulative and deceptive, it is often a challenge to root them out and get rid of them.[4] The lack of positive and effective leadership is a key reason why many talented workers leave the organization.

*Leadership is not a place; it is a process.* James Kouzes and Barry Posner.

Given that everyone has the capacity for leadership at some level, it would seem that the absence of leadership in an organization shouldn't be a problem. However, it isn't likely that everyone will become a leader. Unfortunately, too many people lack the will to change or to develop their

[2] http://www.work911.com/articles/leadchange.htm.
[3] Barbara Blumenthal, *Investing in Capacity Building: A Guide to High-Impact Approaches* (Foundation Center, November 2003).
[4] Jamie Dimon, "The Essential Hallmarks of a Good Leader," http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130613121131-257626722-the-essential-hallmarks-of-a-good-leader.

leadership potential. It is often easier to "go with the flow" and be content with their circumstances. Even if they aren't content, many would rather complain about their situation than do what is necessary to change it.

Becoming a leader means having the will to pursue a path that builds that competency and capacity. This path, however, is not any easy one that is quickly mastered. Most scholars agree that there is no magic bullet or single set of principles or behaviors that leads to effective leadership. Instead, it is becoming increasingly understood that the most effective leadership style in a given situation responds to what is needed. This could be a function of the task required, the organization's culture, the leader's subordinates, and attributes of the leader himself/herself. Furthermore, the development of leadership is an ongoing process, not an event or the implementation of a specific program. The complexity of leadership and its development will be dealt with at length in this book.

This is, essentially, a "how-to" and "why-to" book on developing effective leaders within the organization. It is not full of case studies or examples. Instead, it is a book of principles and practices meant to clarify the nature and role of building leaders and to provide a pragmatic approach for effectively creating a higher level of organizational leadership capacity.

It should be noted that there is a difference between principles and practices. A practice is a specific activity or action, and it needs to be guided by the situation. It is therefore an action that may work in one situation but not necessarily in another.[5] Principles, on the other hand, are deep fundamental and timeless truths that have application to any and all organizations, allowing them to make wise decisions. They will remain true and relevant no matter how the world changes.[6] When these truths are internalized into behavioral habits, they become part of our values and foster the creation of a wide variety of practices to deal with different situations.[7] For example, the principle of *integrity* leads to a variety of practices that demonstrate honesty in a range of different situations.

[5] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 4.
[6] J.C. Collins. *Good to Great*. New York, NY: HarperCollins; 2001: pp.17–40.
[7] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. p. 35.

This book will stress those principles and practices that lead to sustainable and positive leadership within an organization. The more we know and understand key principles to being an effective leader, the greater is our freedom to act wisely.[8] It is important to keep in mind that it takes time to develop this wisdom that leads to the strengthening of organizational performance, and this work is never complete. Clearly, no "quick fixes" exist for becoming an effective leader.

# Chapter 2

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A LEADER?

Because the term "leader" or "leadership" is so frequently misused or misunderstood, it is important that we begin by defining what these terms mean. Unfortunately, the use of the term "leader" has been popularly broadened to include almost anyone in top management or in an elected position.

## Leadership Defined

It would appear that no one has really satisfactorily defined the concept of leadership. One might hear it said that "I can't really describe leadership, but I know it when I see it." In fact, attempted definitions of leadership do not really explain leadership; they at best merely convey the essence of leadership from a particular point of view. For example, in a typical community, the term may refer to anyone in the community who has relatively high visibility, such as elected officials. In an organization, it often is used to highlight the executive director, president, and/or Board members. However, a leader is certainly more than someone who is a widely recognized individual or who possesses organizational authority.

[8] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. P. 123.

Some view leadership as a series of specific traits or characteristics. Others see it as comprised of certain skills and knowledge. And some think of leadership as a process that places an emphasis on social interaction and relationships. A more encompassing perception of a leader is offered by Sorenson & Epps: *a forceful and dynamic personality who really leads from the front; an architect and implementer of strategy; a mediator in conflict situations; an integrator who assures the climate of the organization; a person able to motivate subordinates and who, by persuasion, compulsion or example to others; succeeds in getting others to follow the leader's wishes*[9]. Another definition by John Seaman Garns is that "*leaders are just ordinary people with extraordinary determination*." Harvard Professor Rosabeth Ross Kanter suggests that leadership is "*the art of mastering change . . . the ability to mobilize others' efforts in new directions*."

Although it may be difficult to precisely define leadership, it is important to have a better understanding of what it means if anyone is attempting to learn how to become a leader or a more effective leader. To begin with, however leadership is defined, a leader is someone who has developed a group of followers. These followers have found something in that leader that encourages them to "get hitched to his/her wagon." In fact, people tend to be attracted to leaders whose values are similar to their own.

> *One measure of leadership is the caliber of people who choose to follow you.*
> Dennis A. Peer.

Leadership is certainly more than "finding a parade and getting in front of it."[10] According to Vance Packard, "*leadership appears to be the art of getting others to want to do something you are convinced should be done*." Harry Truman succinctly stated, "*Leadership is the ability to get men to do what they don't want to do and like it*."

[9] Sorensen, A. and Epps, R. "Community Leadership and Local Development," *Journal of Rural Studies*, 1996.
[10] Naisbitt, John. *Megatrends* (New York NY: Warner Books, 1984), p. 178.

Leadership as Influencing Others

Most articles and books on the topic of leadership indicate that it means *influencing the actions of others*. Ken Blanchard, the author of a number of books and articles on leadership has defined it as follows: *In any situation in which someone is trying to influence the behavior of another individual or group, leadership is occurring. Thus, everyone attempts leadership at one time or another, whether his or her activities are centered on a business, educational institution, political organization, economic development organization, or family.*[11] Blanchard more recently defined leadership as *the capacity to influence others by unleashing their power and potential to impact the greater good.*[12] This is similar to Northouse's defining of leadership as "*a process whereby individuals influence groups of individuals to achieve shared goals or commonly desired outcomes.*"[13] The Army defines leadership as influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.[14] The leadership role in an organization is assumed when an individual or group of individuals has a clear vision of what needs to be accomplished and is able to get the members of the organization to strive willingly for common goals.

The most effective means of influencing people is through communication. A leader communicates to his or her followers a direction that they should move toward and tries to influence their attitude so that they will be ready to move in that direction. This requires vision on the part of a leader and the ability to guide people toward a common goal. Clearly, the capability of the organization's leadership to channel the energy of the members of the organization to act on what needs to be done determines the effectiveness of those leaders and the potential impact of the organization.

Obviously, a leader can only exercise influence if people are willing to be influenced. It is also likely that the followers will not totally share the same thinking of the leader. Despite this, they may go along with the desires of a

[11] Hersey, Paul & Blanchard, Kenneth H. *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1982), p. 82.
[12] Blanchard, Ken. *Leading at a Higher Level.* Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010. P. xvi.
[13] P.G.Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice.* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 1997.
[14] http://www.uc.edu/armyrotc/ms2text/MSL_201_L10a_Leadership_Traits_&_Behaviors.pdf.

particular leader in order to achieve a particular outcome. Ideally, everyone should share the same vision so that they can be working toward accomplishing the same goals. If not, leaders can often exert their influence to refocus people's energy through an appropriate group process so that they more comfortably move toward what needs to be done.[15]

The core problem for leaders in any organization involves getting others to do what is required to accomplish the organization's goals.[16] Leaders today work in socially intricate organizations where they need the assistance not only of subordinates but also of peers, superiors, and stakeholders to accomplish their goals. Accomplishing goals that impact the organization positively clearly requires effective leadership.

> *The test of a leader lies in the reaction and response of his followers. He should not have to impose authority. Bossiness in itself never made a leader. He must make his influence felt by example and the instilling of confidence in his followers. The greatness of a leader is measured by the achievements of the led. This is the ultimate test of his effectiveness.* General Omar Bradley.

John Kotter, writing in *Power and Influence Beyond Formal Authority*, states that enlightened leaders can make even rigid bureaucracies more flexible, innovative, and adaptive. Such leaders can certainly make the world of work more exciting and personally satisfying for most people.[17] This is particularly true when all the members of an organization feel some sense of participation as leaders at some level.

A leader's responsibility to the organization is to ensure that there is appropriate leadership of some sort at all times, but this does not always or necessarily have to be provided by top management. As will be discussed in this book, management and leadership are not necessarily synonymous. Generally, the stronger the involvement of staff and organization members as leaders at some level, the more effective the organization.

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[15] Gifford Pinchot, "Creating Organizations with Many Leaders," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 26.
[16] Allan R. Cohen, et al., *Effective Behavior in Organizations.* (Homewood, Ill.: Irwin, 1984), p. 301.
[17] John P. Kotter, *Power and Influence Beyond Formal Authority* (New York: Free Press, 1985), p. 3.

A leader's ability to influence people to act does not necessarily come from special powers. It more often comes from a strong belief in a purpose and willingness to pursue that conviction. In addition, a leader must have the courage to accept the risks associated with the struggle to attain organizational goals, and the skills to develop a consensus.

## Leadership: Born to It or Nurtured?

> *Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.*
> Vince Lombardi

How does an individual achieve a leadership role? How many times have you heard someone described as a natural born leader? It seems that many people assume that some people come into this world with a natural capacity to lead, and everybody else doesn't, and there's not much you can do about it.

Despite these general perceptions to the contrary, leaders are not born; they are nurtured. It should be mentioned, however, that a potential leader can be born with innate qualities that predispose them to being leaders, such as natural intelligence and the ability to learn. This doesn't mean that effective leaders are the smartest people in the room or the organization, but they have to be smart enough to make decisions and to mobilize resources to do the work that is needed. In that sense, the debate about whether leaders are born or made is really important. It's not about how leadership was acquired by someone; it's more about how he or she *acted* on it that makes the difference.

> *It's not what you've been given, but what you do with it that matters.*

While the basic desire or motivation to be a leader cannot be taught, early childhood development of self-worth, self-confidence, and a concern for others can help to nurture leadership characteristics. Successful leaders have also worked hard to gain valuable experience, perspective, and knowledge to become someone who others want to follow.

Understanding whether top management in your organization thinks leaders are born or made can be critical because these attitudes play out in decisions of who to recruit to the organization and/or how staff will be developed. The approach of believing that people are born leaders is likely to result in a focus more on selection (identifying the right people) rather than on development (developing the people you hire). On the other hand, believing that people are made into leaders by their learning and their experiences would be more likely to result in a greater focus on making certain that people had the right opportunities to develop into leaders.[18] In other words, will your organization spend its money on selecting people believed to be born leaders, or on developing people into becoming leaders? Will executives emphasize selection of talent and only invest in those who they believe have leadership potential? Or will they see value in developing talent among a broad group of people?[19]

Research has shown clearly that extraverts, which may be an in-born characteristic, have greater leadership potential than introverts. However, evidence indicates that only the socially skilled extraverts emerge as leaders, and it can probably be safely assumed that social skills are learned. It would appear that extraversion is only an in-born leadership advantage if one also learns and develops effective "soft skills" such as communication and being able to connect with people.[20] Otherwise, if people possessing early gifts for leading don't build on their capacities and instead rest on their laurels, they are destined for a life of frustration and lack of fulfillment as leaders.

Understanding leadership development is a complex affair, however, since a wide range of varying experiences contribute to that development. It is important to point out that two people can have many similar experiences and events in their life at the same point in their development, but end up very dissimilar in terms of their leadership potential. One person may be

[18] William Gentry, et.al., "Are Leaders Born or Made: Perspectives from the Executive Suite," Center for Creative Leadership, March 2012, p. 4.
[19] William Gentry, et.al., "Are Leaders Born or Made: Perspectives from the Executive Suite," Center for Creative Leadership, March 2012, p. 4.
[20] Ronald E. Riggion, "Are Leaders Born or Made? Why the Question Itself Is Dangerous, *Psychology Today*, December 29,2010.

satisfied with life in the "slow lane" while another has a high level of motivation to make a major impact on his or her "world."

John Gardner, in his book *On Leadership,* noted that *most of what leaders have that enables them to lead is learned. Leadership is not a mysterious activity … And the capacity to perform those tasks is widely distributed in the population.*[21] Subsequent chapters of this book will demonstrate how basic leadership competencies and skills can be developed and nurtured through a variety of means including education, training, and experience.

## Leadership and Inspiration

Clearly, leaders must be able to **inspire** people if they are to have followers, but this means that they have to have something worthy of inspiration to communicate. People will be inspired if they strongly desire and believe in what the leader stands for. The leader has to be going somewhere desirable, and must be able to persuade other people to go along. The ability to communicate and invoke action is more important than any other specific personal leadership style or characteristic. The concept of inspiration will be covered in more detail in subsequent chapters of this book.

## Facilitating the Learning of Leadership

Peter Senge (*The Fifth Discipline)* and other noted leadership experts say that the primary job of leaders now is the facilitation of learning. People don't change their behavior unless they first change their attitudes, and this type of change generally comes through a process of learning. Leaders must be able to make a compelling case for the current need for change, or their constituents will stay satisfied with the existing situation, no matter how bad it is. A considerable portion of this book will be devoted to clarifying the learning of leadership competencies and skills.

[21] John Gardner, *On Leadership,* New York NY: Free Press, 1993, p. xv.

*Exercise 1: Leadership Self-Assessment Activity*

> *Go to the following website and take and score the self-assessment survey of leadership:*
> *http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/survlead.html.*
>
> *This survey is designed to provide you with feedback about your level of preference or comfort with leadership characteristics and skills.*

## Leadership in Transition

The importance of good leadership is not a recent phenomenon. Leaders have been critical to effective organizations since people first started working together. However, the nature of this leadership has undergone some changes. The mobility of the nation's population and the resulting loss of a "sense of community" in the last half of the 20th century into the beginning of this century have made it easier for people to identify with the more highly visible political leaders than with the less visible economic leadership in the community and region who so frequently played a key role in the past.

A look at recent trends can also provide a common understanding of the importance of leadership to nonprofit organizations such as local government agencies, chambers of commerce, or economic development organizations (EDOs). The shortage of effective leadership is evident in just about every form of local organization. Thus, when we complain about the scarcity of leadership talent in our communities, we not talking about a lack of people to fill organizational positions, but rather a scarcity of people who are willing and able to assume significant leadership roles. The challenge for the economic development professional is to use existing leaders effectively and to recruit and train new leadership talent for the organization. The focus of the rest of this book will be on developing leadership within and throughout the economic development organization.

# Chapter 3

# UNDERSTANDING THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP

The attempt to understand leadership has been taking place for many years. A number of efforts have been and are being made to create a model or theory that captures key principles of the art of leadership. It is not the purpose of this book to detail those efforts, but it is useful to take a look at some of the leading concepts on leadership so that the reader can gain a better perspective on this important topic.

## Leadership Models and Theories

Considerable debate exists in the scientific community about the definitions of a "model" or "theory." Suffice it to say for our purposes that a leadership model or theory contains ideas on how to lead effectively and/or become a better leader. Numerous theories and versions of theories on leadership exist. However, the general conclusion of leadership research is that leadership principles are timeless, while the models that examine those principles may change.

Regardless, it is useful to review some of the key theories in order to gain a clearer perspective on what constitutes leadership. Some, but certainly not all, of these key theories are discussed in this chapter, including trait theory, behavior theory, and contingency or situational theory. Certain relevant aspects of these theories will make their way into the discussion of leadership in the various subsequent chapters.

### Leadership Trait Theory

One of the early approaches to understanding leadership was the identification of specific "traits" that leaders supposedly possessed. Leadership traits represent the personal characteristics that differentiate leaders from followers. In psychology, a trait is a stable characteristic that

potentially lasts throughout one's entire life. It is something that is relatively inflexible, which would make it difficult for managers to significantly change these traits among their employees (or individuals changing their spouse's traits).

The focus on traits is found in the early research into leadership, which can be characterized as a search for "the great man." Personal characteristics of exemplary leaders were emphasized in this research, and the implicit idea was that leaders are born rather than made. The focus was on identifying and measuring traits that distinguished leaders from non-leaders or effective from ineffective leaders. The hope existed that a profile of an "ideal" leader could be derived from the above that could serve as the basis for selection of future leaders. People with the "right" traits would become the best leaders.

But how do you identify the common traits of good leaders? That was one of the many questions surrounding the study of leadership—questions that led to further research. For one thing, it was found that coming up with an exact list set of leadership traits is difficult due to:

> **Culture.** What works in one part of the world does not necessarily work in other parts; e.g., a trait that works in Germany will be less successful in America; or a trait that works in Manhattan may fall flat in rural Nebraska.
>
> **Context.** Whatever trait is appropriate depends on the context in which one finds oneself. For example, taking a leadership role with a group of people one hardly knows vs. taking that role within an established organization.

Having said that an exact list in impossible to come up with, does not mean that leadership traits are not important in leadership development. It simply means that different experts will come up with different lists. From about 1930 until 1950, research methods for studying social and psychological issues were not as sophisticated as they are today. Generally, when psychologists tried to replicate the studies, they were not consistently successful. The overall evidence suggested that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations.

Despite the questions surrounding the validity of leadership trait theory, it is reasonable to assume that certain personality traits are associated with leadership, while others are not. Research over the years reveals that effective leaders tend to share the following traits:

- **Intelligence** -- the ability to integrate and interpret information.
- **Creativity** -- innovative and original in their thinking
- **Self-confidence** -- trust in themselves and confidence in their abilities.
- **Drive** -- a high level of energy, initiative, and tenaciousness
- **Task-relevant knowledge** -- know their business and what it takes to make it successful.
- **Credibility** – honest, trustworthy, predictable, and dependable.
- **Motivation** -- enjoy influencing others to achieve shared goals.
- **Flexibility** -- adapt to fit the needs of followers and demands of situations. A well-known Chinese proverb says that *the wise adapt themselves to circumstances, as water molds itself to the pitcher*.

These traits will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this book dealing with leadership behavior and competency.

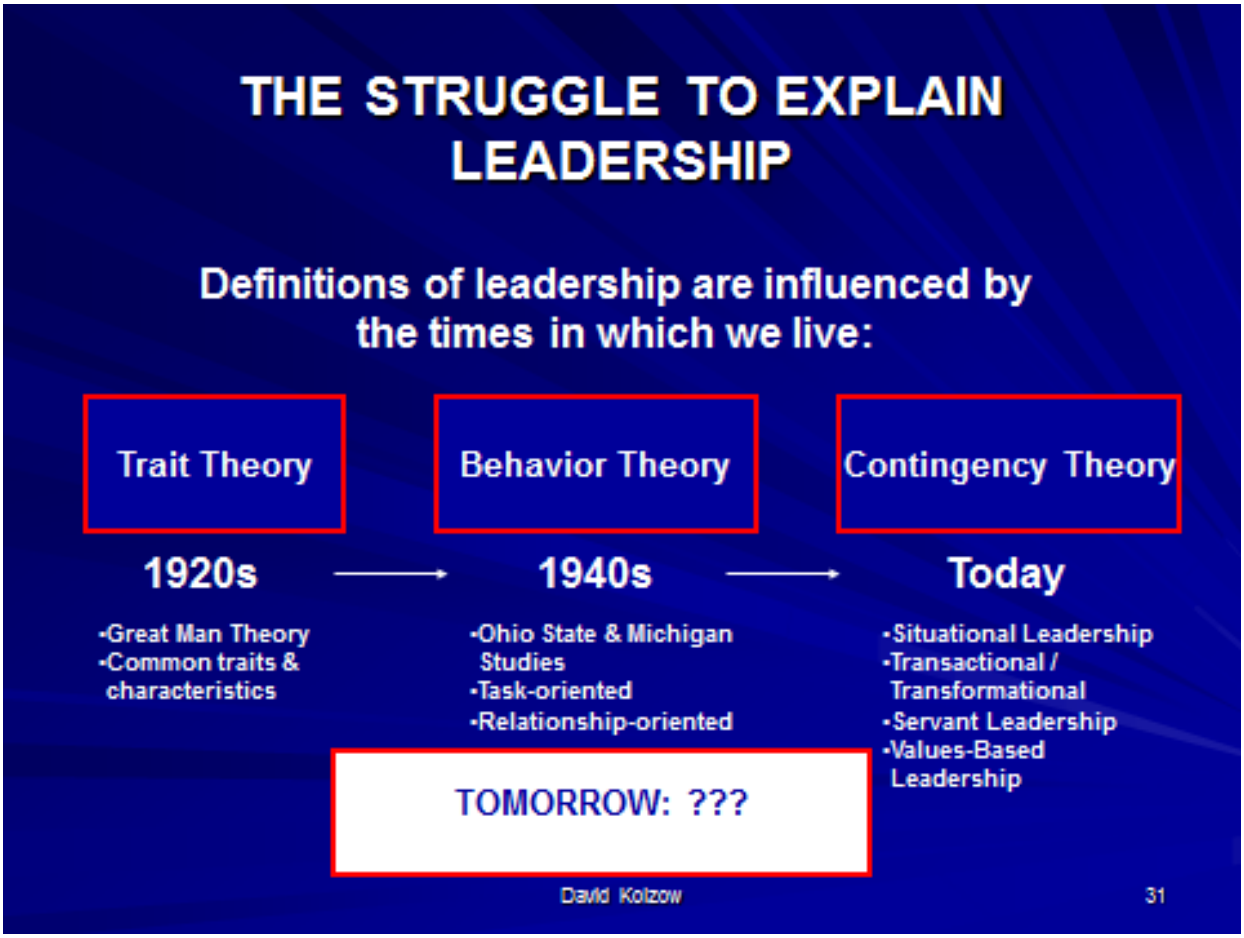
The inability to obtain consistent results when repeating the leadership trait studies raised further questions. Why couldn't researchers scientifically replicate these results? Some researchers pointed to the inherent difficulty in measuring a human personality trait. How do you effectively and consistently measure self-confidence or loyalty, for example?

Trait-based theory, by implication, asserts that the best leaders are born to lead and that effective leadership and potential leaders are determined by a largely pre-destined and unchanging set of character traits. From a training and development standpoint, trait-based theory also implies that if a person does not possess the "right" leadership traits, then he or she will not be able to lead effectively, or, certainly, will not lead as well as a natural-born leader. Training and development can foster leadership ability to a degree, but what really matters in this concept is possessing the appropriate traits or personality profile. The ideas and implications of trait-based leadership theory dominated leadership thinking until the mid-

20th century.[22]

This thinking began to change as questions arose about the impact of the particular situation or the followers' attitudes on the leader's behavior and performance. It became apparent that a person doesn't become an effective leader just because he or she has certain traits. Research into these and other issues led to the birth of additional leadership theories in the 1950s and 1960s. One key idea that led to new thinking about leadership was behavioral theory. Although having certain traits may predispose individuals to certain behaviors, behaviors appeared to be the more important predictor of leadership effectiveness.[23]

**Figure 1: Leadership Theory Transitions**




[22] http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-theories.htm#leadership-introduction.
[23] http://www.bretlsimmons.com/2011-04/leadership-traits-and-behaviors-four-evidence-based-suggestions/.

## Leadership Behavior Theory

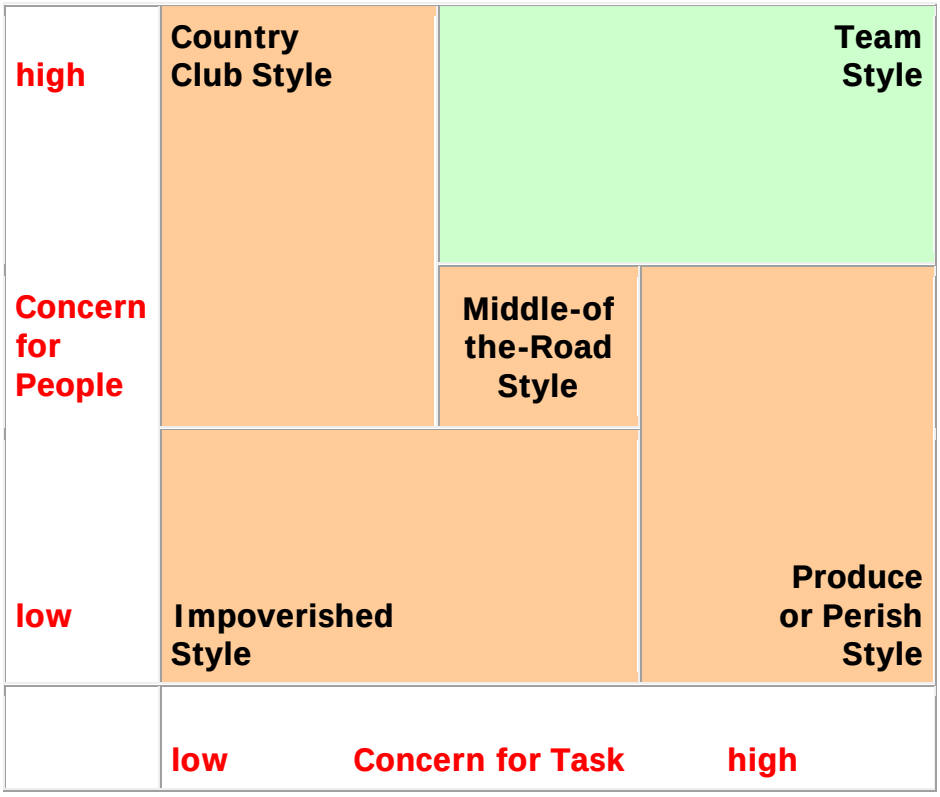
As the questions about how to measure traits continued to challenge trait theory, researchers began thinking about measuring behavior. While you can't easily measure confidence or loyalty in a person, they noted, you can define a behavior or a set of behaviors that seem to embody the trait. Researchers define behaviors as observable actions, which makes measuring them more scientifically valid than trying to measure a human personality trait.

Behavioral theory contains some very different assumptions from trait theory. Trait theory assumes that a leader is born with specific traits that make him or her a good leader. Behavioral theory, on the other hand, assumes that you can learn to become a good leader because you are not drawing on personality traits. Your actions, or what you do, define your leadership ability.

The Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid shown below identified five kinds of leadership behavior.[24] The value of the Grid is that it provides leaders a way of communicating with subordinates more effectively by becoming more aware of their leadership style. It is suggested that the Team Style is the ideal leadership behavior.

[24] Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, *The Managerial Grid: The Key to Leadership Excellence*, 1964.

Figure 2: Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid[25]




## Blake and Mouton grid defined[26]

**Country Club Style** (High People: Low Task) -- Here the leader has a high concern for others and likes to be involved with them. On the other hand, he or she has a low concern for the task. Usually the emphasis of the leader is to cultivate a high level of friendly relationships with the led group. So although leaders like this appear to care about their people and want to create a comfortable and friendly environment, this style is often not good for creating or producing results. People feel good and happy, but what they are supposed to do lacks priority. Ironically, the group suffers ultimately because they fail to achieve. The style is common among leaders who are afraid of upsetting people, and/or who fear rejection and being disliked.

[25] http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-theories.htm#blake-moutons-managerial-grid.
[26] http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-theories.htm#blake-moutons-managerial-grid.

**Impoverished Style** (Low People: Low Task) -- Here the leader has both a low concern for people and a low concern for the task. Those who would adopt this approach are typically "leaders" who care mainly about themselves and are afraid of making mistakes. Not surprisingly, Blake and Mouton determined that this is the least effective approach to leadership.

**Middle-of-the-Road Style** (Mid People: Mid Task) -- This is essentially ineffective compromise. Some concern for the task exists, and, equally, some concern for people, but it might also be said that there is not enough of either. Leaders adopting this behavioral approach try to address the needs of the task and those of their followers to some extent, but do so without conviction, skill, or insight, which reduces their effectiveness. Leadership generally requires a good degree of authority and decisiveness, so a style that lacks these characteristics has much room for improvement.

**Produce or Perish Style** (Low People: High Task) -- Here we see a high focus on the task with little or no concern for people. This style is often referred to as autocratic. Leaders using this style seek to control and dominate others. A leader like this will commonly take the view that staff should be grateful to be employed and paid a salary. Motivation is often attempted through a threat of punishment, such as being fired, which makes this a dictatorial style. In extreme cases it would be rightly regarded as ruthless. Certainly, it can be effective in the short term. Furthermore, where a group is failing to react suitably to a serious crisis then it may actually be a viable style for a short period. However, the approach is not sustainable, especially where followers have the option to walk away.

**Team Style** (High People: High Task) -- This style combines a high concern for and involvement in the group with a strong well-organized and communicated focus on achieving the task. Blake and Mouton saw this as the ideal behavioral approach. Leaders who behave like this manage to blend concern for both people and organizational aims by using a collaborative teamwork approach. This involves considerable dialogue that enables the development of a shared (not imposed) motivation to achieving the organization's goals. This style normally requires that followers/the group are suitably mature and skilled for a high level of involvement. The style is difficult to use, and may be inadvisable when

leading inexperienced people to produce challenging and critical results in a new or strange situation.

## Contingency Theory or Situational Leadership Theory

The findings from the studies just considered ultimately led to contingency (also called situational) theory. According to contingency theory, what works for a leader in one situation may not work in another. This theory attempts to explain why a leader who is very successful in one situation may fail when in another new situation or when the situation changes.

While researchers have proposed several contingency theories, one of the most famous was developed originally by P. Hersey and K. H. Blanchard.[27] In 1982 these researchers developed what they termed situational leadership theory, which uses "styles" of leadership that align with the task-versus-people orientation. But this leadership theory holds that a leader's most appropriate action or behavior depends on the situation and on the followers. To an extent, the effectiveness of a leader depends on whether his or her followers accept or reject him/her, as well as on the extent to which the follower have the ability and willingness to accomplish a specific task. The key words are *acceptance* and *readiness.*

According to Hersey and Blanchard, the motivation and the abilities of various leaders will affect their decisions in a given situation. They group leaders into four styles of leadership: delegating, supporting, coaching, and directing. Their theory assumes that each of these leadership styles can be effective, depending on the development level of the individual or people you are leading. In this theory, then, how you lead isn't a question merely of you and your skills and abilities; it also depends heavily on your followers' abilities and attitudes.

[27] Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, 1982.

Figure 3: Situational Leadership Styles[28]

The **Directing,** or "telling," leadership style is about task behavior. It involves telling people what they should be doing (one-way communication):

- What to do
- How to do it
- Where to do it
- When to do it

The giving of direction is followed by closely supervising their performance.

[28] edymartin.files.wordpress.com/2007/10/situational-leadership.ppt.

**Coaching,** also called "selling," also involves directing people, but in a more supportive way. The leader now attempts to hear the suggestions, ideas, and opinions of his/her followers, which translates to a two-way communication. However, the control over decision-making remains with the leader. It should be pointed out that this is not the type of coaching that will be discussed in Chapter 10 of this book that deals with the leader as enabler and coach.

**Supporting** involves relationship behavior, which includes:

- Listening to people
- Providing support and encouraging the efforts of the followers, who have the ability and knowledge to do the work
- Facilitating their involvement through problem-solving and decision-making
- Passing day-to-day decisions on tasks to the followers who are involved with them.

**Delegating** requires minimal direction and support. The leader enables by discussing problems with the followers and coming to agreement on the nature of the problem. The decision-making for addressing the problem is handled by the subordinates, who "run their own show."

Good leaders, according to Hersey and Blanchard, must adapt their leadership styles to the "maturity" and willingness of their subordinates. This creates a new level of complexity for leaders: how thoroughly the willingness, motivation, and abilities of the followers are considered can decide how successfully they will be led. In this and in similar theories, the leader isn't everything; the followers must be included in the equation.

Subordinates in an organization may be at various levels of their own development. Initially, they may need to simply be told what they need to do. Employees must be capable of the needed response to delegated tasks and must take ownership of what is being delegated before receiving authority to proceed. At the initial stage of their development, they are likely to lack the specific skills required for the job at hand. Decision-making by employees who lack knowledge, skills, and dedication places the organization at significant risk. To paraphrase Deming, if you want to

rob employees of their pride of workmanship, ask them to do something they cannot do.[29]

At some point, employees may merely need to be shown what to do. However, if they have some level of competence but a low level of commitment, they won't be able to do the job without help. The task or the situation may be new to them, even though they may have some relevant skills.

As their learning level rises, employees should be given the opportunity to do a task on their own, regardless of some risk being present. However, although they may be experienced and capable, they may lack the confidence to go it alone or the motivation to do it well or quickly.

Generally, those who have a high level of commitment will be eager to learn and be willing to take direction. As employees grow in confidence and capability, top management may only need to observe performance and reinforce the positive. Ultimately, in this model, the leader only needs to manage the consequences of the work of the subordinates. Employees are experienced at the job, and comfortable with their ability to do it well. They may even be more skilled at the task than the leader.

From management's perspective, the greater the development level of the subordinates, or followers, the less time the leadership needs to spend managing staff and still getting high quality results. Furthermore, leadership will be most effective if a leader can look at a situation, decide what style of leadership is needed by the group, and act accordingly.

[29] Tom Hornsby & Larry Warkoczeksi, *New Roles for Leaders.* Franklin TN: Hillsboro Press, 2000, p. 28.

# Chapter 4

## WHAT'S YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

In this chapter, we move from broad concepts of leadership models into a discussion of more practical aspects of leadership. The focus here is on an initial discussion of leadership *behavior*, which is demonstrated by one's style of leadership. In other words, a leadership style reflects a distinct way of behaving. The topic of leadership behaviors themselves will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. This chapter revolves around broader styles of leadership that reflect a combination of various individual behaviors.

The various leadership styles that exist provide no guidance on the kind of leadership that leaders should offer; they merely reflect what kinds exist. A style tends to contain what a particular leader has learned from other leaders that served as role models, and this style is influenced strongly by this experience. The leadership style also is affected by the purpose or goal of the leaders.[30] Another influence, which is often quite strong, is the particular personality of the leader and/or the personality or capability of the followers or group being led, and/or of the situation in which the leader is leading his or her people.

> *The story goes that sometime, close to a battlefield over 200 years ago, a man in civilian clothes rode past a small group of exhausted battle-weary soldiers digging an obviously important defensive position. The section leader, making no effort to help, was shouting orders, threatening punishment if the work was not completed within the hour.*
>
> *"Why are you are not helping?" asked the stranger on horseback.*
>
> *"I am in charge. The men do as I tell them," said the section leader, adding, "Help them yourself if you feel strongly about it."*
>
> *To the section leader's surprise the stranger dismounted and helped the men until the job was finished.*

[30] http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-theories.htm#leadership-introduction.

*Before leaving the stranger congratulated the men for their work, and approached the puzzled section leader.*

*"You should notify top command next time your rank prevents you from supporting your men - and I will provide a more permanent solution," said the stranger.*

*Up close, the section leader now recognized General Washington, and also the lesson he'd just been taught.*[31]

Personal characteristics have a significant impact on leadership style, and one's leadership style determines to a great degree one's response to every situation. It influences how the organization is being led, and how the outside customers and public view it. Effective leaders are able to adapt their style of behavior to the needs of their followers and to the nature of the situation, as was just discussed in the contingency theory. That is one of the reasons why there is no single model for a successful leader. Many historical leaders, such as Churchill, Lincoln, and others have been excellent leaders in difficult times and situations, but have been unsuccessful at other times.

## Authoritarian vs. Democratic Leadership

The two ends of the spectrum of leadership style range from a focus on implementing specific tasks to a focus on the dynamics of human relationships. Leaders who focus primarily on getting specific tasks accomplished can be described as authoritarian; others who stress the development of interpersonal relationships may be viewed as democratic leaders.

Some leaders are able to incorporate both styles of leadership behavior, depending upon which is appropriate to the situation. Leaders develop their particular primary style over time from experience, education, and training. However, a domineering leadership style may stifle the

[31] http://www.citehr.com/124791-leadership-cannot-really-taught-can-only-learned.html.

responsiveness of the organization. Too much power-sharing, on the other hand, may create confusion or lack of direction.

The *authoritarian leader* is all about "control" and managing the completion of tasks. Authoritarian leaders often approach situations with the attitude that other people are innately unwilling to get involved and are basically unreliable. They tend to use their power to dominate their followers. In the authoritarian style, most (if not all) policies are determined by the leader. Decision-making for the authoritarian leader is usually autocratic, which means no input from others until after the decision is made. This often results in the lack of creative solutions to problems, which can ultimately hurt the performance of the organization.

As was stated previously, the authoritarian style typically involves a focus on tasks, in which leaders are likely to organize and define the roles of the members of their group (followers). This requires explaining which activities each is to do and when, where, and how tasks are to be accomplished. The authoritarian leader in an organization will tend to spend more time on management issues than on interpersonal relationships.

Authoritarian leadership is very effective in those situations in which people have a high level of trust in the organization, when the task is straightforward, when a decision needs to be made quickly, and/or when the leader is given responsibility for directing action. A danger in authoritarian leadership is the tendency toward negative motivation: using threats, coercion, and other non-reinforcing means to achieve results. This can create a culture of crisis in the organization, with the leader as either oppressor or rescuer or both.

As situations in an organization become more complex, it becomes increasingly difficult for leaders to achieve their goals by using formal authority alone. If we as adults are paying attention, we learn that control isn't a sustainable and effective way to approach working with other people. Leaders are expected to find ways of obtaining the highest level of productivity from those they lead, and using control is likely to have the

opposite effect of that which is desired. They increasingly need to build alliances with those on whom they are ultimately dependent, otherwise employees lose their motivation to excel and may even quit to find a more favorable work environment.

The *democratic style* is at the other end of the leadership spectrum. It assumes that the power of leaders is granted by the group they are to lead, and that people can be basically self-directed and creative if they are motivated to do so. The democratic style of leadership, therefore, tends to be more participative; policies evolve from group discussion and from a group decision-making process. By sharing decision-making and other responsibilities, the group is more likely to make full use of all the potential of its members, and individual self-esteem tends to increase. Furthermore, the more that members participate in making the decisions that affect them, have a clear picture of the goals of the group, and have a recognized part to play in helping the group reach those goals, the higher will be the group's cohesion and commitment to the process. However, when <u>everything</u> is a matter of group discussion and decision, not much room for leadership is left.

The value of a cooperative effort should not be minimized. Many management experts believe that the wave of the future in management and leadership is individual empowerment, which recognizes the abilities individuals possess and what they can and will do when involved.[32] With shared leadership, an increased sense of "ownership" of plans and ideas by all members exists, and the process becomes more enjoyable. This concept of empowerment will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

Democratic leaders are more likely to develop and maintain personal relationships between themselves and members of their group (followers) by opening up improved channels of communication, providing "psychological strokes," facilitating change in the behavior of the group, and demonstrating change in themselves. This leader is more likely to "inspire" change than "impose" change, as Warren Bennis observes.[33] It has been said that a *good* leader inspires people to have confidence in

[32] Plunkett, Warren R. and Raymond F. Attner. *Introduction to Management.* Boston: PWS-Kent, 1992.
[33] Bennis, Warren. *Why Leaders Can't Lead*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1989.

him/her; a *great* leader inspires people to have confidence in themselves. "Coaches" or team-builders, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10, are examples of this democratic style.

Democratic leadership tends to work best in situations where group members are skilled and eager to share their knowledge. The flow of work in an organization needs to allow plenty of time to allow people to contribute, develop a plan, and then decide on the best course of action.[34]

Historically, effective leadership has incorporated elements of both styles. Observers must be cautious not to misread or stereotype a leader's style. The most effective leader adopts the style most productive in a given situation. For instance, if the situation calls for quick decisions and fast mobilization of resources, a more authoritarian style may be called for and appreciated by followers. However, even authoritarianism that is appropriate to the situation is unlikely to be successful if an atmosphere of group participation has not been previously developed using more democratic means.

*Exercise 2: LEADERSHIP STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE.*

*This questionnaire can be used to gain a better idea of your leadership style in a group or organization in which you are a member. The three styles are autocratic, democratic, and delegative. The questionnaire can be found at: http://www.scribd.com/doc/39061378/Leadership-Style-Questionnaire.*

## Power and Leadership

Leadership, as noted earlier, ideally involves the act of influencing others to follow. Leaders work most effectively by influence. They act in ways that cause others to choose to act in accordance with their leader's wishes.

[34] Kendra Cherry, "What is Democratic Leadership," http://psychology.about.com/od/leadership/f/democratic-leadership.htm.

Power has been defined as the ability to influence the actions of others, which means that leadership can be viewed as the effective use of power. Leaders are people who have and use power.[35] While an individual may exert power without being a leader, an individual cannot be a leader without having some level of power.

> *Nearly all men can stand adversity but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.* Abraham Lincoln

In today's politically correct environment, organizational leaders tend to shy away from the "power" word, often preferring to talk about "empowerment?" Some people have a strong negative reaction when talking about power because that word often is associated with negative applications; for example, manipulation, abuse, or harassment. The word "power" brings to mind someone who is riding roughshod over others.

However, "Power" is not necessarily a negative concept. Power, like conflict, exists in all human interactions and is not always bad. It is how power and conflict are used and managed that determines how they should be thought of. When power is used in an ethical and purposeful way, there is nothing evil about it. In that light, a dictionary definition of power is the "ability to act or produce an effect".

What a lot of research over many years has discovered is that power is really just a capacity. It is the capacity to influence other people and the strength and courage to accomplish something. It turns out that power, when applied appropriately, is exactly what it takes to promote action and make positive change happen. Continuing this thought, power, as defined by Stephen Covey, is the vital energy to make choices and decisions.[36] Without some measure of power, a manager or leader would find it difficult to manage the work of his or her subordinates, thereby negatively impacting the productivity of the organization.

[35]Richard Lynch. *Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 26.
[36] Stephen Covey. *Principle-Centered Leadership* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p. 23.

Actually, it is the perception others hold about a leader's power that gives one the ability to achieve compliance or influence. If leaders are to increase their chances of successfully influencing the behavior of others, they must know how to communicate to others the power they actually possess, as well as to build upon the powers they are perceived to have.

It is helpful to understand the following different types of leadership power and how they affect change in the organization. They basically fall into two broad categories, namely, positional power and personal power.

Positional Power

> *It's not the position that makes the leader; it's the leader that makes the position.* Stanley Huffty

Individuals able to induce other individuals to perform a certain job because of their position in the organization are considered to have *positional power*, which is sometimes known as *legitimate power*. This is not true leadership, however. Leadership is not an inherent right that comes with a position; it is a privilege that evolves through a process. Generally, a mayor of a city, a county commissioner, the chief executive officer of an organization, or the chairman of the board are good examples of position power. However, being in these management positions does not necessarily equate to being a leader. Furthermore, the organization's size and culture often has a bearing on the amount of influence exerted by individuals holding these key management positions.

Position gives an individual the power to make significant changes in the organization, to hire and fire staff, and to allocate resources. These individuals often derive a significant share of their influence from the position they hold, and a certain level of credibility is associated with these positions. People who rely on their position often mistakenly believe that it is the responsibility of others to come to them for what they need and want. However, people follow individuals with position power because they have to and will usually do only what is required of them. When those in positions of power ask for extra effort or time on the job, they

rarely get it.[37] That is why good leaders understand that it is *their* responsibility to initiate a productive and positive relationship with their people.[38]

> *Do not worry about holding high position; worry rather about playing your proper role.* Confucius

Positional leaders rarely value involving others when they make decisions or initiate action. Instead, they rely on their position to get things done. Unfortunately, what might be potentially a good decision is less likely to come to pass if no process is put in place to help it gain acceptance.

Certainly the elements of position power are essential to getting some things accomplished. If, however, the strategic transformation of the organization is what is desired, then position power is not likely to be enough to produce the needed change. Over the long run, it is the leader's personal power that can be transformational, and not his/her positional power.

## Coercive Power

> *He that complies against his will, is of his own opinion still.* Samuel Butler.

*Coercive power*, which is a type of positional power, gains compliance through threats or punishment. Followers are afraid of what might happen to them if they don't do what they are asked to do. This type of power is often held by an individual with the ultimate authority to fire subordinates. While the mere threat of coercive power may be enough to obtain a reaction from employees, it is insufficient to produce the type of significant and sustainable change that is sought from a transformational leader. Instead, coercive power often produces superficial commitment ("lip-service loyalty") and even hidden defiance and resistance among individuals, which is the opposite of what is hoped for.

[37] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 7.
[38] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 68.

In organizations, the most appropriate use of coercion is to deter behavior that is very detrimental, such as illegal activities, theft, violation of safety rules, reckless behavior that endangers others, and direct disobedience of legitimate requests.[39] Furthermore, a leader might prefer coercive power as the most effective and desirable strategy in a particular situation, but might not use it out of concern that others would strongly disapprove.

## Resource and Reward Power

> *You can motivate by fear. And you can motivate by reward. But both of these methods are only temporary. The only lasting thing is self-motivation.*
> Homer Rice

People have *resource power*, another type of positional power, when they have the responsibility to decide what resources are available to others in the organization, such as budget expenditures, technology assets, or staffing assignments. Even a person low in the organizational management hierarchy can often have a great deal of resource control. Thus a person in charge of the organization's finances, who can influence the sanction of other employees' expenditure budget, can exercise resource power over them. It isn't surprising that many of the political battles in organizations are over control of its resources. Clearly, the manager or managers in an organization need to get things done, which means they need to mobilize resources. In order to mobilize resources, a manager needs some amount of power.

Additionally, when someone is in the position to *reward* others, it gives that individual power. People comply because doing so produces positive benefits. These rewards are not just financial; they can be anything that someone values. Frequently, sincere public recognition in the form of praise, awards, and ceremonies focusing on the person's contributions and achievements are found to be very effective.

[39] R. Dennis Green, "Leadership as a Function of Power," *Proposal Management*, Fall 1999, p. 96.

## Relationship Power

*Relationship, or personal, power* doesn't come from title, rank, or position on the organizational chart; it is derived from who the leader is personally. The competencies of the leader and his/her relationship skills, such as the ability to communicate or be persuasive, play an important part in this power base.

When it is clear that a leader likes people he/she interacts with and treats them like they have value, that leader is more likely to have influence with them. This personal power is the outcome of the respect that people have for this individual. Over time, trust and respect can evolve, and the interaction becomes much more positive and the relationships are more sustainable.

> *You can like people without leading them, but you cannot lead people well without liking them.* John C. Maxwell, in *The Five Levels of Leadership.*

Relationship power is held by people in many types of relationships and is typified by the "do it for me" favor. These individuals derive their power primarily from the response of their followers. *Personal power is the extent to which followers respect, feel good about, and are committed to their leader, and see their goals as being shared and satisfied by the goals of their leader. In other words, personal power is the extent to which people are willing to follow a leader.*[40]

All great leaders use their personal power to extend their influence, and to persuade, educate, encourage, and empower others. That's how great organizations build relationships, establish credibility, and create an organizational culture of change. Building personal power capacity will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

## Referent Power

*Referent power* is another type of personal power. Celebrities, charismatic leaders, and other highly-respected people hold referent power. Wikipedia

[40] Covey, Stephen. *Principle-Centered Leadership* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), p. 108.

defines referent power as, i*ndividual power based on a high level of identification with, admiration of, or respect for the powerholder*. Those with referent power inside the organization are excellent candidates to become game-changing leaders because their influence and leadership are driven by the value and respect others have of them. Referent power explains why celebrities are paid millions of dollars to endorse products or services in commercials.

## Expert Power

*Knowledge is power.* Frances Bacon

Another type of personal power is *expert power*. This is found in those who it is believed are able to help others with performing a certain task or job, or who possess a unique base of needed information. These leaders can have a positive impact on staff members when they believe, recognize, and respect the leader's expertise and track record. On the other hand, leaders may try to protect their elevated status by hiding the sources of their knowledge and making it difficult for others to access it. The "silos" that exist in many organizations reflect this kind of thinking.

When expert leaders have the welfare of the organization and its members in mind, they can be viewed as having a unique ability to see the organization more clearly and understand problems more accurately than anyone else in the organization. This type of power gains compliance based on the ability to dispense valued information. As jobs become more specialized and technology more complex, organizations are becoming increasingly dependent on their "experts."

However, just having the expertise is not enough. This expert must behave in a way that leads others in the organization to recognize and value that expertise. In addition, an effective leader's job is not to know everything but to recruit and work with people who know things that he or she does not.

The Use of Power

Some individuals can have at different times or even simultaneously combinations of these different types of power. Regardless of the type of power, the amount of power or influence a leader has is related to a number of factors, including:

- Personal qualities (appearance, age, family background, reputation, special skills, and communication abilities).
- Control of or access to such resources as jobs, wealth, property, services, businesses, and prestige.
- Their reputation in their field and their technical expertise.
- Their ability to get things done.
- The cumulative influence growing out of all the positions or offices held.
- Their optimistic and positive nature (a positive self-image).

If a leader acknowledges and understands the power that he or she possesses, the result is a greater sense of control over one's job, one's tasks, and one's choices. Henry Miller once said that *the only way in which anyone can lead you is to restore to you the belief in your own guidance.* Once people learn what their points of power are, it is possible to expand them. They are not stuck with the power they have; they have the capacity to learn new bases of power.

A leader must use power wisely and justly, or it can become a liability rather than an asset. It only takes one incompetent act to result in an immediate loss of power. Good leaders work to build their sources of power and use their powers to influence others in the organization so that goals can be met and visions achieved.

## The Charismatic Leader

> *Charisma is the intense magnetic charm that reaches people on an emotional, non-rational level, inspiring efforts and undertakings beyond the norms of ordinary life*. Dyan Macon.[41]

People tend to think of leaders as people who influence others to follow by the power of their *charismatic personality*. We think, for example, of John F. Kennedy's press conferences or Martin Luther King's stirring speeches. The "charismatic" leader is able to articulate a compelling vision that responds to the needs and aspirations of the followers. Through their relationship with the charismatic leader, the followers gain feelings of power and build their self-esteem.[42]

Actually, leaders don't have charisma; followers give leaders charisma. People tend to ascribe charisma to a leader who appears to meet their ideals and their needs. Charismatic leadership relies on the twin effect of a leader's personality and a strong belief by followers that this special person is the one to lead them in their hour of need. Charisma can be based on anything from physical appearance to past actions and successes.

Charismatic leaders are generally very skilled communicators. They tend to be individuals who are both verbally eloquent, but also able to communicate to followers on a deep, emotional level.[43] These charismatic leaders use effective communication with their followers to gain their trust, and then influence and persuade them to follow. Charismatic leaders also pay a great deal of attention to scanning and reading their environment, and are good at picking up the moods and concerns of both individuals and larger audiences. They then will try to hone their actions and words to suit the situation.[44]

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[41] Dyan Machan. "The Charisma Merchants," *Forbes*, January 23, 1989, pp..100-101.
[42] Richard Lynch. *Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 6.
[43] Ronald E. Riggio, "What Is Charisma and Charismatic Leadership?" *Cutting-Edge Leadership,* October 7, 2012.
[44] http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/charismatic_leadership.htm.

Charisma can also be a negative if the leader becomes self-centered and domineering. Charismatic leaders can fall into the trap of charming themselves, a result of the heady recognition they get from the followers. Furthermore, when an organization is no longer in the crisis that may have brought this leader forward, the leader may attempt to cling to power, which could drive other potential leaders away. When there is a lack of concern or responsiveness to followers and constituents, the charismatic leader can lose his/her luster.

Far too much emphasis today is placed on this elusive trait called charisma. *The person who can command attention and fire people up is not the only one who can do the job. Leaders can quietly inspire through other means, such as technical ability, insight, and honesty*, as long as they are emotionally involved in what they are doing.[45] The long-term success of organizations will usually be influenced, not by strong and charismatic leaders, but by leaders who can build "learning organizations," as described by Peter Senge, where *people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future*.[46]

Charismatic leadership can also create dependency among followers. This may cause followers to assume that this leader has all the answers, and so followers take less responsibility for themselves and for important initiatives. The other side of this coin is that when charismatic leaders fail in some manner, then their credibility suffers, together with the wellbeing of the dependent followers. These failures can be the inability to demonstrate innovation and responsibility to their followers, or organizational goals are increasingly not met, or group effectiveness and results are negatively impacted.

On the other hand, charismatic leaders are often better at creating and stimulating necessary and sometimes swift change. Traditional leaders, more correctly defined as "managers," are frequently disposed toward lower levels of risk, preferring to administer rather than to truly lead. They are more inclined toward the pragmatic rather than the visionary. These

[45] Lynch, Richard. Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 101.
[46] Senge, Peter. "The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations," *Sloan Management Review*, V32N1, (Fall 1990): 7-23.

qualities rarely bring about significant transformations in organizations. *Creativity demands intuition, uncertainty, unconventionality, and individual expression*.[47] The charismatic leader embodies many of these creative forces and is able to stimulate enthusiastic responses from those who follow.

In the final analysis, Peter Drucker, one of the most respected of all management consultants, came to the conclusion that effective leaders have little or no charisma. He was of the belief that *popularity is not leadership; results are.*

## Transactional Leadership

Another leadership style, *transactional leadership*, assumes that people are motivated primarily by reward and punishment. This style is very related to the autocratic style discussed earlier. The belief is that employees perform their best when the chain of command is definite and clear, and that reward or punishment is contingent upon performance. They should be happy to hand over all authority and responsibility to a leader, which is the opposite thinking of an empowered employee. The focus of the transactional leader is on maintaining the status quo, and the primary goal of the followers is to obey the instructions and commands of the leader.

The transactional leader is more a manager than a leader, and is highly focused on getting tasks accomplished, providing very clear direction, and overseeing productivity in detail. He or she tends to think inside the box when solving organizational problems. The concern is with the work process, rather than with forward-thinking ideas. Rules, procedures, and standards are essential to the transactional leader. This type of leader tends to carefully monitor and micro-manage a subordinate's work, making corrections throughout the process. When a subordinate fails to meet expectations, the next step is often a penalty or punishment.

A major downside of the transactional style is that it does not consider other potential factors that may influence outcomes and therefore affect leadership effectiveness. For example, if clear behavioral or outcome

[47] Conger, Jay A. *The Charismatic Leader: Behind the Mystique of Exceptional Leadership* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987) p. 17.

expectations are expressed by top leadership, but the reward for achieving them is not considered adequate, staff leaders may not be motivated to work hard to make these outcomes happen.

The strictly transactional leader is unable to embody qualities like empowerment and development of employees, whereas the transformational leader that is discussed in the next section will realize certain situations call for a transactional style of leadership. The main difference between the two styles, however, is that the relationship between transactional leaders and employees is centered on goals and rewards, such as increases in pay and moving up in an organization. For strictly transactional organizations, the overall outcome is simply a "prescription for mediocrity."[48]

## Transformational Leadership

> *Clearly the leader who commands compelling causes has an extraordinary potential influence over followers.* James MacGregor Burns.

In the 1970s and 1980s, researchers such as J. M. Burns and B. M. Bass defined the concept of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership grows out of the assumption that people will follow a leader who inspires and motivates them. In this leadership style, the leader motivates and inspires by developing a compelling vision, selling that vision, and focusing on developing relationships with followers as a teacher, mentor, and coach.

Although the charismatic leader and the transformational leader can have many similarities, their main difference is in their basic focus. Whereas the transformational leader has a basic focus on transforming the organization and, quite possibly, their followers, the charismatic leader may not want to change anything except to improve on his or her popularity.[49] Those leaders who are not charismatic extroverts are more likely to take a team

[48] http://integratingwomanleaders.com/transformational-leadership-do-great-leaders-share-the-same-traits/?goback=%2Egde_1022597_member_131169946.
[49] http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/charismatic_leadership.htm.

approach to solving problems in the organization and to let talented members loose the reins.[50]

A transformational leader is the result of significant and continuous learning and relationship building. He or she engages subordinates by spending a great deal of time building trust and demonstrating a high level of personal integrity. The ultimate goal is to "transform" the goals, vision, and sense of purpose of the followers, molding them into a cohesive team. This leadership style tends to help motivate followers to be loyal and dedicated workers, with the goal also of helping every member of the group be successful.

*Let him that would move the world, first move himself.* Socrates

This type or style of leadership often focuses on the "big picture" and on concern for people and their individual needs. Four main components (the four "I's") the transformational leader strives to achieve are:

**Idealized Influence** -- A transformational leader's behavior becomes a role model for employees through exemplary behavior that instills pride and trust among followers. Because followers trust and respect the leader, they try to emulate this individual and personally adopt his or her ideals.

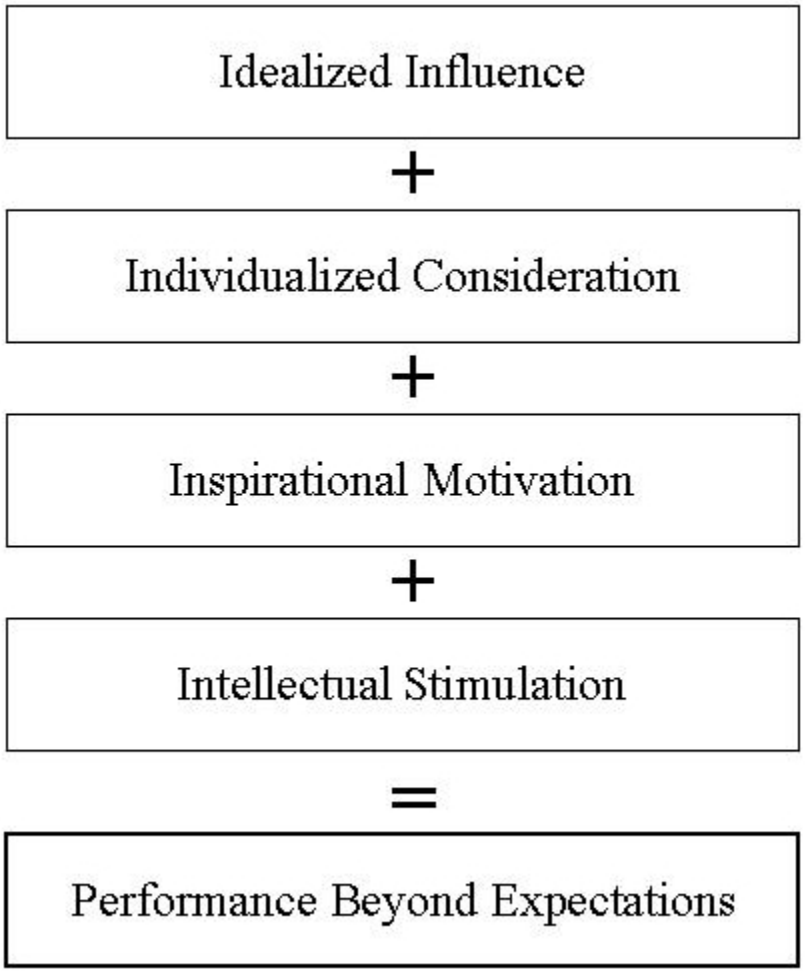
**Inspirational Motivation** -- A transformational leader usually has a sense of team spirit, enthusiasm, passion, and optimism. This type of leader helps employees dedicate themselves to the organization's vision. Certainly, leaders can't motivate followers, but they can provide an inspiration for achievement.

**Intellectual Stimulation** -- A transformational leader must question old assumptions, cast existing problems in a new light, encourage creativity and innovation, and look at more effective ways to make decisions. In this leadership style, a leader solicits ideas, and nurtures and develops people who think independently and who value learning.

[50] Nick Tasler, "Five Secrets of Charismatic Leadership," *Businessweek,* Nov. 2, 2010, http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/nov2010/ca2010112_608471.htm.

**Individualized Consideration** -- A transformational leader pays attention to the needs of individuals, and seeks to develop followers by supporting, mentoring, and coaching employees to reach their full potential.[51] A concern exists to keep lines of communication open so that followers feel free to share ideas in this supportive environment. This type of leader also makes a strong effort to recognize followers for their unique contributions.

**Figure 4: Transformational Leadership Components**




[52]

[51] http://integratingwomanleaders.com/transformational-leadership-do-great-leaders-share-the-same-traits/?goback=%2Egde_1022597_member_131169946.
[52] http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/hr020.

These four components are essential when it comes to transforming an organization and empowering employees. The transformational leader has to be quick to adapt to changes within an organization. In fact, the purpose of effective leadership is to create positive change. Along with this, he or she dedicates time and effort into translating the organization's vision and mission to each employee for purposes of motivation, inspiration, and unifying the organization as a whole. Becoming a transformational leader is an *evolutionary* process.

A considerable literature base can be found about Transformational Leadership, and most data indicate that it tends to predict positive outcomes for organizations in terms of things like performance and desired organizational behavior.[53] One of the potential problems with Transformational Leadership is that enthusiasm can easily be mistaken for competency. While it is true that great things have been achieved through enthusiastic leadership, it is also true that many passionate leaders have led their followers into a bad place. Just because someone *believes* they are right, it does not mean they *are* right.[54]

**Figure 5: The Difference Between Transactional and Transformational Leaders[55]**

| **Transactional Leadership** | **Transformational Leadership** |
|---|---|
| Leadership is responsive | Leadership is proactive |
| Works within the organizational culture | Works to change the organizational culture by implementing new ideas |
| Makes employees achieve desired organizational outcomes through rewards and punishment | Encourages and empowers employees to achieve the organization's desired outcomes by appealing to higher ideals and values |
| Tries to motivate followers by appealing to their own self-interest | Encourages followers to transcend their own interests for those of the organization or team |

[53] http://www.knowwpcarey.com/article.cfm?cid=25&aid=1151.
[54] http://changingminds.org/disciplines/leadership/styles/transformational_leadership.htm.
[55] http://www.managementstudyguide.com/transactional-leadership.htm.

## The Servant Leader

> *Servant Leadership is more than a concept. As far as I am concerned, it is a fact. I would simply define it by saying that any great leader, by which I also mean an ethical leader of any group, will see herself or himself primarily as a servant of that group and will act accordingly*. M. Scott Peck, in his book *The Road Less Traveled.*

Servant Leadership represents a philosophy in which leaders focus on increased service to others rather than on increasing their own power. The goal is to enhance the growth of individuals in the organization and increase teamwork and personal involvement. The best test of the Servant-Leadership philosophy is whether or not those served by the organization and the organization's staff grow as persons.[56] In other words, servant leaders are givers, not takers.

> *Service is the rent we pay for the privilege of living on this earth.*
> N. Eldon Tanner.

The phrase "Servant Leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said:

> *The servant-leader is servant first… It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions…The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.*
>
> *The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they,*

[56] http://home.earthlink.net/~denmartin/slc.html.

*while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?*[57]

The concept of a servant leader is certainly not new. In the New Testament of the Bible, we have this statement from Jesus: *You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.* (Mark 10:42-45).

*It's not about you.* Rick Warren in *The Purpose Driven Life.*

Greenleaf scholars generally agree that the following behaviors are central to the development of a servant-leader:[58]

*1. Listening* Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. While these are also important skills for the servant-leader, they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant leader particularly needs to pay attention to what remains unspoken in the management setting. Listening, coupled with regular periods of reflection, is essential to the growth of the servant-leader.[59]

*2. Empathy* Servant-leaders try to empathize with and understand others' feelings and emotion. It is assumed that an individual has good intentions even when he or she performs poorly. Workers may be considered not only as employees, but also as people who need respect and appreciation for their personal development.

*3. Healing* Servant-leaders strive to make themselves and others whole in the face of failure or suffering. A servant leader tries to help people solve their problems and conflicts in

[57] http://www.greenleaf.org/whatissl/.
[58] http://www.greenleaf.org/whatissl/.
[59] http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2005/spears_practice.pdf.

relationships, because he or she wants to encourage and support the personal development of each individual.

*4. Awareness* Servant-leaders are very self-aware of their strengths and limitations. They have the ability to view situations from a more integrated, holistic position.[60] As a result, they gain a better understanding about organizational ethics and values.

*5. Persuasion* Servant-leaders rely more on persuasion than positional authority when making decisions and trying to influence others. They do not take advantage of their power and status by coercing compliance; instead, they try to convince those they manage. The servant-leader is therefore effective at building consensus within groups.

*6.Conceptualization* Servant-leaders seek to nurture their abilities to "dream great dreams."[61] Servant-leaders take the time and effort to develop a desirable vision of the future. They seek an appropriate balance between a short-term, day-to-day focus and a long-term positive direction. That means they have the ability to see beyond the current activities of the operating organization and can focus on long term goals.

*7. Foresight* Foresight is the ability to anticipate the likely outcome of a course of action or a situation. The servant leader is able to learn from the past to achieve a better understanding about the current reality. This foresight also enables the servant leader to identify consequences about the future, a characteristic closely related to conceptualization.

*8. Stewardship* Servant-leaders assume that they are stewards of the people and resources they manage. Servant leadership is seen as an obligation to help and serve others. Openness and persuasion are considered more important than control.

9. *Commitment to the growth of people* Servant-leaders are committed to people beyond their immediate work role. Servant-

[60] http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2005/spears_practice.pdf.
[61] http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2005/spears_practice.pdf.

leaders are convinced that people have an intrinsic value beyond their contributions as workers. They commit to fostering an environment that encourages the personal and professional growth of their follower and employees. The servant-leader will also encourage the ideas of everyone and involve workers in decision-making. Servant-leaders believe that their role is to help other people achieve their goals.

*10. Building Community* Servant-leaders strive to create a sense of community both within and outside the work organization.

Being just a service-oriented person, in the traditional notion of being a servant, does not necessarily qualify one as a servant leader. Arlene Hall has observed that *doing menial chores does not necessarily indicate a servant leader. Instead a servant leader is one who invests himself or herself in enabling others, in helping them be and do their best.*[62] In addition, servant-leadership should not be equated with self-serving motives to please people or to satisfy one's need for acceptance and approval.

> *The highest destiny of the individual is to serve rather than to rule.* Albert Einstein.

At the very heart of servant-leadership is the genuine desire to serve others for the common good. The goal of the servant leader is to help people, not just to make them happy. In servant-leadership, self-interest gives way to collective human development. What distinguishes servant-leaders from others is not the quality of the decisions they make, but how they exercise their responsibility and whom they consult in reaching these decisions. [63]

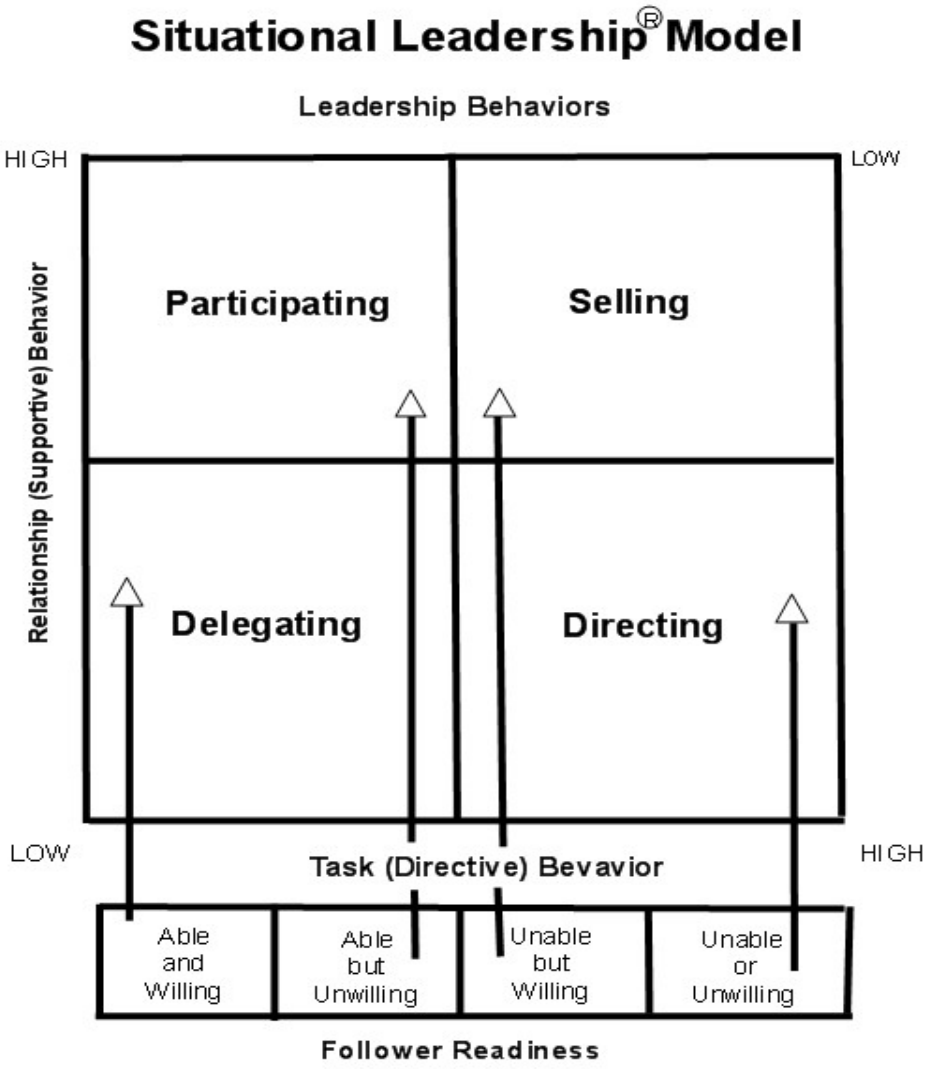
[62] Hall, A. S. 1991. "Why a Great Leader." In K. Hall Living Leadership: Biblical Leadership Speaks to Our Day. Anderson, IN: Warner Press, p. 14.
[63] http://hci2010mmp.wiki.hci.edu.sg/file/view/Conceptual+Framework.pdf .

## Situational Leadership

As we have seen, many theories and techniques exist for determining the right leadership styles for individuals in an organization. It can be argued that the best type of leadership is determined by the specific situation, and that no one style of leadership is appropriate for all given workplace situations. Effective leaders should be aware of where they are with a specific follower, and where that follower is in his/her own stage of leadership development. For example, giving staff too much or too little direction can have a negative impact on their performance and their development as leaders.

Therefore, identifying the leadership style for an organization should ideally take into careful consideration the specific task, the complexity of the organization, and qualifications of the employees. A variety of leadership styles may be needed to lead different groups, such as the employees, the Board of Directors, volunteer groups associated with the organization, etc. Furthermore, the use of a particular leadership style with a particular person can depend on the situation of that person at a particular time. This leads us to the concept/theory of situational leadership that was briefly discussed in Chapter 3. In Figure 6, the term "situational leadership" is copyrighted by Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson.

**Figure 6: Situational Leadership Model**




Knowing how to lead a group or another person implies knowledge of their competency and level of commitment as they are dealt with. This can be partially determined by looking at their performance and their level of enthusiasm and interest in doing a task. Clearly, someone who is just learning their job cannot be led in the same way as someone who has been doing it successfully for a while. The former would require a "directing"

leader, and the latter a delegating or coaching style. Therefore, it is important to diagnose individuals to determine what they need from leadership.

## Conclusions About Leadership Styles

After 50 years of working with corporate and organizational leaders, Peter Drucker concluded that "leadership styles" and "leadership traits" do not exist.[64] No particular style appears to exist that is practiced by effective leaders, but, instead, different approaches to leading are used at different times and in different situations. This concept will be considered in more length in a subsequent chapter of this book that will attempt to integrate all of the thinking about leadership into a set of conclusions and recommendations for building leadership capacity.

However, as the next chapter points out, distinct characteristics, competencies, and behaviors can help someone become a leader and help existing leaders become more effective.

[64] Frances Hesselbein, et.al., editors. *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. xi.

# Chapter 5

# DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

## Leadership Character

> *A person's true character is revealed by what he does when no one else is watching.* Unknown.

Few would argue that the most successful and effective organizations are those that strive constantly for excellence. This striving begins with the top leadership of the organization. However, leaders do not command excellence, they build excellence. Excellence is "being all you can be" within the bounds of doing what is right for your organization. If excellence begins with leadership, then that leader must be of good character. A leader's character shapes the culture of his or her organization and subsequently the public opinion about the organization.

A leader's *character* is what you consistently experience with that individual. The example of their conduct determines to a great extent the influence they have over their followers. In other words, who you "really are" affects how effective you will be in leading others. Ghandi, for example, believed that his personal life gave him the credibility that enabled him to be a successful leader.

> *If you want to be a great leader of others, you must first become a great leader of yourself.* John Spence.

Clearly, individuals cannot be effective leaders if their personal lives are a mess. People won't trust someone who has significant slips in character. If it is evident that your followers are unreliable or untrustworthy, then it is important to examine your character to determine why you are attracting those types of follower.

> *No man can climb out beyond the limitations of his own character.* British politician and writer John Morley.

Leadership is certainly about character, but that character needs to be enhanced by competence for it to be effective. On the other hand,

competence and talent without character will not take anyone very far as a leader. Leaders in this rapidly changing world need to continuously take stock of their character and their competencies with respect to the impact on their embracing or resisting change. Certainly, who we are is to a great extent what we have experienced, and how we perceive events and people around us directly impacts the choices we make. Unless leaders understand the vision that motivates them to lead, the purpose that inspires them, and the values that empower them, it is difficult to make courageous and needed choices and decisions in a chaotic world.[65]

If leaders are to be inspired and then inspire others, they must have a clear sense of their personal and professional values. These values will be distinct to each leader, and they should be clearly evident to everyone in the organization. Leaders must believe in the values they express, and must work hard to get their personal values in sync with those of the organization. People greatly admire leaders who know where they stand on important principles and have confidence in their own beliefs and values. Ultimately, the successful organization will discover and embrace shared values.

> *Leadership is a potent combination of strategy and character. But if you must be without one, be without strategy.* General H. Norman Schwartzkopf.

Leadership character is also about building relationships and adding value to others. Relationships either add to or subtract from a person's life. Leaders will either have a positive or a negative impact on their followers, but they will undoubtedly have an impact. Leaders with strong positive character will pursue making things better for those that follow them, which leads to building a high level of mutual trust. Ineffective and weak leaders can easily damage their organization, and it has long been demonstrated that it is easier to damage an organization than it is to build a good one.

[65] Richard J. Leider, "The Ultimate Leadership Task." Frances Hesselbein, et.al. editors *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p. 192.

*When people respect you as a person, they admire you. When they respect you as a friend, they love you. When they respect you as a leader, they follow you.* John Maxwell, in *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.*

Leaders need to model the behavior they expect of others, which means they must demonstrate and communicate clear values for both themselves and their organization and be ethical in all their dealings. They must stand up for those beliefs of theirs that are deeply rooted and held dear. Rudy Giuliani states in his book *Leadership* that *you cannot ask those who work for you to do something you're unwilling to do yourself. It is up to you to set a standard of behavior.*[66]

The three "Cs" of leadership credibility might be summarized as follows:

Credo – *This I believe.*

Competencies – *This I can do.*

Conviction – *This I will do.*

### *Exercise 3: Clarifying Your Values*

*It can be helpful to better understand your own values if you articulate them. This can be facilitated by writing a tribute to yourself that asks some key questions for you to answer. The idea is to think about how you would most like to be seen by others, or what descriptions of you would make you feel good about yourself. Ask yourself the following questions and put your answers in writing:*

1. *What do I stand for?*
2. *What do I believe in?*
3. *What am I discontented about?*
4. *What do I think about the most?*
5. *What makes me sad at work?*
6. *What brings me joy in my work?*
7. *What do I get most excited about?*
8. *What legacy do I want to leave?*

[66] Rudolph W. Giuliani, *Leadership*, New York: Miramax Books, 2002, p. 209.

## Leadership Behavior

> *Your job gives you authority. Your behavior gives you respect.* Irwin Federman, CEO Monolithic Memories

Extensive literature on the subject of the character of successful leaders points to a number of characteristics and behaviors being present. It is clear that personal attitudes play a major role in determining our character and on how we interact with others. In order to become better leaders, we must be ready to deal with our own internal ideas, preconceptions, and how we think so that we can adjust our attitudes appropriately.[67]

Although we are certainly able to determine our own attitudes through self-reflection, the attitude of others is usually not very evident to us. However, we can gain some insight by observing their behavior. These are defined as observable behaviors because each describes a specific action or behavior you can perform, and you can readily observe whether you yourself and others are really performing them. A person's observable behavior is clearly an indication of his/her attitude, which forms and shapes one's behaviors and reflects one's character.

Our behaviors are not really mysterious. They are simple actions anyone can consciously choose to perform or not perform, and they are heavily influenced by one's values. If you rate yourself, or others rate you, as unsatisfactory on some of these behaviors that doesn't mean you're beyond help. It simply means you are not remembering or choosing to do them. The simple solution is to start doing them. You always have that option if you want to improve things. Practice can bring significantly increased skill in exercising each of the behaviors.

> *He that would govern others first should be master of himself.* Philip Massinger, from *The Bondman*, 1624.

Daniel Goleman states that *the behavior of leaders is responsible for at least 70 percent of the emotional climate of an organization, and this in turn drives 20 to 30 percent of the organization's business performance*.[68] In much of the research on leadership behavior, conscientiousness was the most consistent

[67] Jack Ferraro, "Self-Directed Leadership Development – Moving Beyond the PMP." http://www.compaid.com/caiinternet/ezine/ferraro-sdl.pdf.
[68] http://talentmgt.com/articles/view/modeling_behavior_the_ripple_effect_of_performance_management/5

predictor of leadership effectiveness. Leadership development initiatives focus on being conscientious in assuming responsibilities rather than passively waiting to act until problems develop.[69]

> *Our greatest challenge as leaders is not understanding the practice of leadership; it is practicing our understanding of leadership.* Marshall Goldsmith.

On the surface, many of the noted leadership behaviors may seem obvious. When they are defined clearly, most people would agree these are things we should be doing. What's often missing is having key behaviors that lead to effective leadership in a readily available checklist to remind us to do them.[70] When non-leaders read through these key behaviors that lead to the desirable characteristics of good leaders, they usually agree that these behaviors are important. However, they typically don't really do them, and their excuse is that they don't have time.

Successful people acknowledge the importance of key behaviors and agree it's difficult to find time to think about and do them. Typically, however, successful people force themselves to take the time because they've learned that doing these things saves much more time in the long run. It eliminates much wheel spinning and repetitive false starts that less successful people waste time on because they won't take time to rise above day-to-day fire-fighting and instead find a way to prevent the fires from starting.[71]

One of the more effective ways of learning the critical behaviors of effective leaders is through observation, which may include:

- Observing other successful people and copying what they did (i.e., productive behaviors)
- Observing and learning from the mistakes (i.e., critical behavior omissions and counter-productive behaviors) of unsuccessful people

[69] http://www.bretlsimmons.com/2011-04/leadership-traits-and-behaviors-four-evidence-based-suggestions/.
[70] http://www.yoursoulatwork.com/competencies.htm.
[71] http://www.yoursoulatwork.com/competencies.htm.

Few of us are intuitive observers. We may watch the behavior of others, but in the daily rush of activity it isn't so easy to isolate what specific actions are making others successful, or unsuccessful, in their performance. For instance, if you had the opportunity to observe a world class surgeon perform a complicated operation, when it was over would you have a hard time saying what he or she specifically did or did not do that made the operation successful? On the other hand, if a medical student with a written checklist of key surgical behaviors for that operation watched, he or she could continually compare the surgeon's actions with the checklist and learn a great deal about what the surgeon was and was not doing to succeed.[72]

The list of desirable behaviors for leaders is extensive. Effective leadership is a complex of different but related behaviors. Some of the more important behaviors are discussed in the following pages. Clearly, leadership is not about any one characteristic or behavior such as integrity. Although each behavior is important, it is the effective integration of these behaviors into a leader of character that is critical. In the following discussion of key positive leadership behaviors, it will be evident that a considerable overlap exists among them. Although each behavior is distinct, each of them reflects aspects of related behaviors.

## Being Trustworthy

> *The leader who does not trust enough will not be trusted.* Lao Tsu.
>
> *Among all the attributes of the greatest leaders of our time, one stands above the rest: They are all highly trusted.* David Horsager, author of *The Trust Edge: How Top Leaders Gain Faster Results, Deeper Relationships, and a Stronger Bottom Line.*

One key leadership characteristic that also seems to be integral to all other characteristics is the ability of the leader to generate and sustain **trust**. Trust is the glue that holds an organization together. Highly respected professionals such as Steven Covey suggest that establishing a sustainable

[72] http://www.yoursoulatwork.com/competencies.htm

organization requires long-term trustworthiness. If no trust exists, there is no influence over others, which means there is no leadership. Without trust, a leader will never get the results he or she wants.

> *Leaders can no longer trust in power; instead, they rely on the power of trust.* Charles Green.

Basically, trust is a matter of predictability and reliability. People trust those whose behavior is consistent and who display competence, even if they don't really like them. It is much easier for people to consider you trustworthy if they have a sense of what you are likely to do in a given situation. Relationships and communication often break down when the people involved cannot predict or figure out what the other party is trying to accomplish. When people have little confidence about how you will behave in certain circumstances, they may have hope but not trust.

Predictability is demonstrated by such actions as meeting commitments and keeping promises. It is therefore important that you do what you say you are going to do. This also enhances the sense of reciprocity needed to encourage others to follow through on what they have promised. As was also stated earlier, being trustworthy yourself promotes trusting behavior from other people. Trust in a relationship generally develops gradually over time through a pattern of predictability in the personal interactions between the parties.

However, consistency of behavior is difficult in a climate of constant and complex change, which means that the ability to be trusted can be put to the test when major change is occurring within the organization or to it. Those leaders who take a stand in the midst of adversity and are committed to see an action through are more likely to gain the trust of others. This is important, because leaders can't repeatedly break trust with people without losing their ability to influence them.

Trust certainly does not happen simply because of someone's position or title. As was just discussed, trust must be earned, and that takes time. Trust can develop when people feel the safety and security of being accepted. Acceptance leads to trust because it increases the chances that

people will be confident that your behavior will have positive consequences for them. To trust someone means that you allow yourself to take risks in what you share with them. Trust exists when we make ourselves vulnerable to others whose subsequent behavior we cannot control. When your thoughts and ideas are shot down or ridiculed, it doesn't take long to realize that the climate is neither safe nor conducive to making yourself vulnerable.

Therefore, for trust to happen, people must view each other as trustworthy. The role of the person learning to trust someone is to take risks; the role of the one being trusted is to be worthy of trust. When each party in this relationship is good enough at his or her roles, a condition of trust results. If either party falls down on the job, trust will disappear.

Trusting others is easy for those who believe that everyone is basically "good." This type of person tends to trust everyone until specific experiences prove some individuals not trustworthy. Others are much less likely to trust anyone. They believe that all people are basically "bad" and will behave in selfish ways that are bound to harm others if given the opportunity. This type of person will distrust everyone until specific experiences with an individual demonstrate that he or she is an exception. Naturally, these mistrustful persons watch their words very carefully. Since open communication is rare from them, they are difficult to work with.

What happens when people do not trust each other? They will ignore, disguise, and distort facts, ideas, conclusions, and feelings that they believe will increase their vulnerability to others. Not surprisingly, the likelihood of misunderstanding and misinterpretation will greatly increase.

How can a climate of trust be created? It must begin with <u>you</u>! You begin by being open about <u>your</u> own mistakes and vulnerabilities. We have a natural tendency not to admit <u>our</u> mistakes for fear that we will lose "face." It is seen as a sign of weakness. But, experience shows that letting others know that you are human is one of the best ways to enhance your credibility. People tend to distrust those who give the appearance of being infallible. It is not a good idea to reveal your every fault to those with whom you are working, but it is recommended that you admit your

mistakes and let others know that you are approachable.

In a continuing relationship, the more trust you place in others, generally, the more they will justify your faith. If you demonstrate your belief in their honesty and reliability, they will be encouraged to live up to these expectations. Honesty in interpersonal relationships is the key to trusting. Honesty helps create trust because it relates to the ability to predict an outcome.

If leaders intend to be trustworthy, they need to learn how to interact with others in ways that increase trust levels while avoiding the pitfalls that ruin trust. Great leaders do not always seek to please their followers, but rather seek to build their own credibility and thereby earn trust and respect. Building a reputation for being trustworthy is like managing a brand. It takes a diligent and ongoing effort to establish what you want to be known for, as many firms such as Nike or Toyota have learned.

Many organizations have learned that the answer to the question "Do you trust your boss?" is more predictive of team and organizational success than perhaps any other question they might ask. According to Stephen Covey, if a leader's character is fundamentally flawed and is marked by duplicity and insincerity, then he or she is not going to be successful as an influential leader.[73] Insecure leaders generally do not place their trust in others and as a result they don't receive trust from others. People want leaders who are credible and can be consistently believed. Otherwise, actions, no matter how good they seem, will merely be viewed as manipulative. Attempting to use human relations "techniques" as such as a substitute for a genuine interest in others will not have any permanent value.

> *What you are shouts so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say.* Ralph Waldo Emerson.

> *If you don't believe in the messenger, you won't believe the message.*

[73] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. p. 22.

Clearly, what we *are* communicates more effectively than anything we *say* or *do*.[74] People see the world as they are conditioned to see it, not as *it is* but as *who they are.* Their perceptions are their realities. That is why it is so imperative that we try to see ourselves as others see us, not just as we see ourselves. Is our behavior communicating a sense of trust and respect to others, or is a negative attitude on our part reflected in our behavior that we are demonstrating to those around us.

Building trust in the organization generally requires an environment of openness, encouraging the voicing of dissent. People need to feel that they are unlikely to be punished, and may well be rewarded, for disagreeing, for taking innovative risks, and for occasionally failing. People want to know that their leader will support them and provide them with what they need to achieve the desired outcomes.

Stephen Covey defines a "High Trust Leader" as an individual who has unquestionably strong personal credibility, has the ability to create and grow trust with others, and who is then able to extend that trust into the organization itself. High Trust Leaders are those in management roles who understand the impact trust always plays on two key outcomes: how quickly work gets done and at what cost. Additionally, low levels of trust reduce the effectiveness of the organization and high levels are likely to improve the delivery of the organization's services and products.[75]

In summary, a trusted leader must demonstrate a behavior of being willing to trust, especially trusting those who have earned it. Expanding this willingness is clearly a function of one's *attitude.* This includes extending trust conditionally to those who are just beginning to earn your trust. An effective leader needs to learn how to appropriately extend trust to others based on the situation, risk, and character/competence of the people involved. If you want to be trusted, you have to be trustworthy. A risk is always involved with trust, but without the risk there is no reward that comes from trust.

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[74] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. p. 21.

[75] http://www.missionfacilitators.com/Articles/Executive%20Coaching/Tools/13%20Behaviors%20Handout%20about%20Trust.pdf.

*Trust is established through action and over time, and it is a leader's responsibility to demonstrate what it means to keep your word and earn a reputation for trustworthiness.* Hank Paulson, CEO, Goldman Sachs.

*The chief lesson I have learned in a long life is that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him.* Henry Stimson, U.S. Statesman.

*Exercise 4: A Leadership Organizational Trust Assessment that helps you assess the level of trust in the organization is found at the following site:*
http://www.compassusa.biz/self_assessment_example/LeadersTrustAssessment.pdf.

*Exercise 5: A Feedback Activity on Trust*[76]

*Instructions: This trust inventory allows you to examine your current feelings toward other members of your organization. Completing this inventory lets you examine unexpressed feelings of trust or distrust within your organization and helps you clarify the reasons for those feelings. It may also help you to increase your own feelings of trust within the organization and promote greater self-disclosure and risk-taking. Assessing these feelings can provide a basis for subsequent assessment of your trust levels in any organization.*

1. *Complete all the following questions. You may want to share with colleagues any of your answers after completing this inventory.*
    a. *How did you feel as you joined this organization?*
    b. *How do you feel about this organization and your place in it right now?*
    c. *Which person in this organization do you feel the most positive about right now? Describe what makes you feel good about that person.*
    d. *Toward whom in this organization do you react most negatively right now? Describe what that person does that produces this negative feeling.*

[76] http://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/inner_leadership/lib0103.html.

e. *What prevents you from being more open and honest in this organization?*
f. *Which person in this organization do you perceive as feeling the most positive toward you right now? Why do you feel that this person feels positive about you?*
g. *Which person in this organization do you perceive as feeling the most negative about you right now? Why do you feel that this person is having negative feelings toward you?*

2. *Rate each of your organization members on a 5-point scale according to how much trust you feel toward him or her. Use "1" to indicate "very little" and "5" to indicate "very much."*

| *Name* | *Rating* |
|---|---|
| *a.*_____ | _____ |
| *b.*_____ | _____ |
| *c.*_____ | _____ |
| *d.*_____ | _____ |

*Etc.*

*Total Score* _____
*Total Score Average Score = (Total Score/N)* _____

3. *For those individuals to whom you have given low trust ratings, list several ways in which:*
   a. *You can change your behavior to increase your feelings of trust toward them.*
   b. *They might behave to allow you to feel more trust toward them.*

*Exercise 6: Conditions that Lead to Conflict or Trust*[77]

*Instructions: This activity is designed to help you locate the conditions in any organization that help or hinder the growth of trust, and identify those conditions that apply to your specific organization. By completing this activity, you should be able to assess the trust level in your organization and help bring about a higher level of trusting others and cooperating more fully in organizational tasks.*

[77] http://westsidetoastmasters.com/resources/inner_leadership/lib0103.html.

*This activity is most productive when done by the reader while working with a small group of coworkers.*

1. *Make a list of all of the conditions in any organization that lead to high levels of creativity, individuality, and trust.*
2. *Make a list of all the conditions in any organization that minimize trust and that lead to greater dependency.*
3. *Underline those statements in each of the above lists that describe conditions that presently exist in your own organization.*
4. *Analyze your two personalized lists:*
    a. *Identify the conditions contributing to conflict in your workplace.*
    b. *Identify those conditions in your organization essential to a culture of trust.*
    c. *List any insights into your own work and/or organization that you have gained.*

## Integrity

> *Without knowing who you are, you cannot lead with integrity.* Steve Dellaporta from the United States Department of Defense, Manpower Data Center.

As was alluded to in the previous comments, a leader cannot generate trust unless he or she consistently is viewed as having **integrity**. Integrity means doing the right thing at all times and in all circumstances, whether or not anyone is watching.[78] It is "walking the talk." People who adhere to a strong set of principles or being true to themselves, and who have the courage to take responsibility for their actions, have integrity.

It is the leader's behavior that demonstrates integrity to his/her followers. Unfortunately, far too often, leaders place a higher value on impressing others than on demonstrating integrity with them. Whatever leaders say about their own integrity, followers wait to be shown. The only way it can be known for sure whether someone is honest is to observe how he or she

[78] Amy Ross Anderson, "Success Will Come and Go, But Integrity Is Forever," *Forbes,* 11/28/2012.

behaves. Trust is destroyed by manipulating people, distorting facts, or spinning the truth. Without integrity, trust is never achieved.

Integrity certainly includes honesty, but it goes beyond that. Honesty is about telling the truth. Integrity is about keeping our promises and fulfilling expectations. It takes having the courage of our convictions to do the right thing, no matter what the consequences will be or how inconvenient and unpopular the results.

> *To be persuasive we must be believable; to be believable we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful.* Edward R. Murrow, Journalist and News Commentator.

Unfortunately, we live in a world where far too often "the end justifies the means." Economic development professionals and local government officials have been known to overpromise and under-deliver just to land a prospect. Applicants for jobs might exaggerate their accomplishments or even lie about them. Mistakes made by the organization may be covered up because of fear it will lose community or stakeholder support. The list is endless, and in each case the person being dishonest is likely to have told himself/herself that there was a perfectly valid reason why the end result justified the lack of integrity. Building a reputation of integrity takes years, but it only takes a minute to lose that reputation.

> *The reputation of a thousand years may be determined by the conduct of one hour.* Japanese Proverb.

Another important way of demonstrating integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present. In doing so, we build the trust of those who *are* present.[79] Building this loyalty includes giving credit to others and speaking about people as if they were present, and not badmouthing others behind their backs or disclosing the private information of others.

> *If you want to retain those who are present, be loyal to those who are absent. The key to the many is the one.* Stephen R. Covey.

[79] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. p. 196.

Integrity also involves consistency of behavior, which means treating everyone by the same set of principles. Initially, being open and honest with others can make them uncomfortable, but consistent kindness and caring that is demonstrated in one's behavior will, in most cases, overcome their resistance and lead to their trust. Integrity is likely to "win the day."

An important dimension of integrity is the keeping of commitments. This begins with stating what you're going to do. The next step is then to do what you say you're going to do. Because they are so important to a credible leader, commitments should be made carefully and kept at all costs. People tend to build their hopes around promises made, particularly promises regarding their livelihood and work environment.

Integrity is lost when you attempt to talk your way out of a commitment you've broken. As we make and keep commitments, even small ones, we begin to create an inner integrity that leads to stronger self-control and the acceptance of more of the responsibility for our own behavior. According to Stephen Covey, the *power to make and keep commitments to ourselves is the essence of developing the basic habits of effectiveness.*[80] An effective leader "practices what he/she preaches" and builds a strong commitment throughout the staff to achieve demanding yet compelling goals.

On the other hand, a leader that has integrity but lacks competence can often lead to a well-meaning individual who is unable to make anything happen. This type of so-called leader can take the organization down a dead end.

> *I look for three things in hiring people. The first is personal integrity, the second is intelligence, and the third is a high energy level. But if you don't have the first, the second two don't matter.* Warren Buffett, CEO, Berkshire-Hathaway.

Most scholars agree that a high level of character and integrity cannot be taught. However, leadership training can help someone discover the level

[80] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. p. 92.

of integrity they already have. One either has integrity or doesn't. On the other hand, if we evaluate our values and obtain key feedback from others, we can make the opportunity to modify our behaviors to ensure that they are line with our inherent integrity.[81]

## Self-Reflection

> *The most difficult thing in life is to know yourself.* Thales.

*Self-reflection* is an important behavior that is demonstrated by leaders. It involves being aware of and understanding one's personal strengths and weaknesses, and what one does well and not so well. For leaders to take their followers in a good direction, they really need to take the time to reflect and learn from their experiences. It's about "knowing oneself." This introspection can establish a baseline for a leader to determine at what stage in his or her development he or she is, and what direction to head toward.

> *No one can produce great things who is not thoroughly sincere in dealing with himself.* Poet James Russell Lowell.

It is virtually impossible to know yourself without receiving feedback from those with whom you have contact. It isn't easy to ask for feedback, but it is important. Otherwise, for example, it is difficult to know what personal shortcoming one needs to guard against in working with others. However, if you don't value this feedback, then it won't have much of an impact on your development as a leader.

One can also gain feedback from assessing what is happening in your relationship with others or in your work life. If time is taken to really observe what is happening around you, it is possible to have a much better sense of people's reactions to you and your behavior. This improves your ability to anticipate those reactions in similar future circumstances.

It is important to note that the less feedback you receive, the more vulnerable you become as a leader. This is certainly true for your

[81] http://leadershiptrainingdevelopment.com/can-you-teachor-learn-integrity.

organization as well, which also needs ongoing feedback with respect to its performance.

*You develop yourself to develop others.* Confucius.

If we have a clear awareness of who we are, it is possible to develop the habit of staying tuned to what we say and do. However, self-awareness also means people must understand *why* they are the way they are. They need to know just what experiences, values, and knowledge have shaped them to be who they are.

Some activities you can do to improve your self-awareness:

- Keep a journal – Journals help improve your self-awareness. If you spend just a few minutes each day writing down your thoughts, this can move you to a higher degree of self-awareness.

- Slow down – When you experience anger or other strong emotions, slow down to examine why. Remember, no matter what the situation, you can always choose how you react to it.

### *Exercise 7: A Self-Reflection Assessment*[82]

The following **Leadership Self-Assessment** is a series of statements and reflective questions that offer insight into your leadership style to help you identify your strengths and opportunities for growth.

**Instructions:** Rate yourself on a scale of **1 (Rarely)**, **2 (Sometimes)** or **3 (Almost Always)** on the following statements.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | In a discussion, I can see areas of agreement among differing opinions. | 1 2 3 |
| 2. | I lead by example, not just by words. | 1 2 3 |
| 3. | I notice good work and I give staff or those I am working with positive feedback. | 1 2 3 |
| 4. | I recognize the value of humor in the workplace. | 1 2 3 |

[82]Modified from Parlakian, R., & Seibel, N. L. (2001).Being in Charge: Reflective leadership in infant/family programs. Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 5. | I have a vision of where the organization or project I lead is going and can communicate it to others. | 1 2 3 |
| 6. | When something is not going right for one of my staff members or someone I am working with, I take the time to help them think it through and develop an approach to solving it. | 1 2 3 |
| 7. | I am comfortable telling others when I don't know the answer to a particular question. | 1 2 3 |
| 8. | I make sure we celebrate as a team when we meet milestones. | 1 2 3 |
| 9. | I have ways of handling the pressures of my position that allow me to think and strategize even in the midst of crisis. | 1 2 3 |
| 10. | I focus the work of the organization/project I lead around the clients and customers we serve. | 1 2 3 |
| 11. | I make sure people know that it is safe to share their opinions and to say what they really think and feel. | 1 2 3 |
| 12. | I encourage people to let me know what they need in order to work well, and, whenever possible, ensure that they get it. | 1 2 3 |
| 13. | I gather input from others and involve staff in decision-making. I share decision-making whenever appropriate. | 1 2 3 |
| 14. | I make opportunities to stay current about issues in my field. | 1 2 3 |
| 15. | I think before I act. | 1 2 3 |
| 16. | I meet regularly with the staff who report to me. | 1 2 3 |
| 17. | I solicit feedback from my staff about my own performance. | 1 2 3 |
| 18. | I have a mentor or coach in the organization. | 1 2 3 |
| 19. | I balance multiple tasks and prioritize when faced with limited time and/or resources. | 1 2 3 |
| 20. | I keep a mental record of every commitment that I make and follow through on my promises. | 1 2 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 21. | I ask a lot of questions to gain a better understanding of a problem in our organization. | 1 2 3 |
| 22. | I view my successes with both pride and humility, ensuring that those who aided me are given appropriate credit. | 1 2 3 |
| 23. | I make every effort to determine the needs, expectations, and wants of others within the organization. | 1 2 3 |
| 24. | I find a way to get important things done, and will make personal sacrifices to accomplish organizational goals. | 1 2 3 |
| 25. | I have a thorough understanding of my own emotions and feelings, and how they impact the situation at hand. | 1 2 3 |
| 26. | I take into account the potential implications of a decision on those being affected before moving forward. | 1 2 3 |
| 27. | I tend to act decisively, with an enthusiasm for making things happen. | 1 2 3 |
| 28. | I try to recognize and consider the emotions and feelings of others before taking action. | 1 2 3 |
| 29. | I generally demonstrate boldness in striving for ambitious goals rather than settling for the safety of readily achievable results. | 1 2 3 |
| 30. | I act receptive to the new ideas of others and try to improve or enhance them in a non-threatening manner. | 1 2 3 |

## Understanding Your Responses

### If your responses were mostly

**Ones:**
Reflective supervision may be new to you or your organization. Consider attending an external training session on effective organizational behavior. You also may wish to do some independent reading on reflective supervision.

**Twos:**
Reflective supervision is not entirely new to you, but you may be hesitant to fully implement it in practice. Beginning with the areas you marked as “ones,” work with your supervisor to identify experiences that will help you build your skills and use them with confidence. Consider attending workshops or conferences on the subject.

**Threes:**
You are comfortable using reflective supervision with your staff and have integrated many facets of this approach into your daily work. You can expand your knowledge and continue growing by identifying your next challenges, for example: develop your own training session on reflective supervision, mentor a colleague, and continue to take external classes and conferences.

*Exercise 8: Self-Reflection*

*Take an hour or two to sit quietly and write "your story" about the development of your leadership abilities. Think about where you are in the process of becoming a more effective leader, who is following you or respecting you as a leader, and where you would like to be headed.*

## Self-confidence

*Nothing builds self-esteem and self-confidence like accomplishment.*
Thomas Carlyle, historian and essayist.

One of the attributes that defines a leader is **a belief in oneself**.[83] Self-reflection is an important step that can lead to increased self-confidence. Self-confidence consists of an optimistic belief in one's ability to succeed. Before one can lead others, one must be confident in one's own capabilities. *Self-leadership is the essence of leadership.*[84] However, this is not about arrogance or egotism. Instead, by knowing themselves, self-confident leaders have the boldness to undertake the difficult tasks and challenges necessary to meet their goals. They try new things, offer ideas, exude positive energy, and cooperate and collaborate with their colleagues.[85]

*Self-confidence is the lifeblood of success.* Jack Welch.

[83] Charles Handy, "The New Language of Organizing and Its Implications for Leaders," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 8.
[84] Richard J. Leider, "The Ultimate Leadership Task." Frances Hesselbein, et.al. editors *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p. 192.
[85] Jack Welch, "The Six Deadly Sins of Leadership," http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130327154206-86541065-the-six-deadly-sins-of-leadership.

Self-confidence emanates from a strong feeling of **self-esteem.** This comes from a general sense that we can cope with what's going on in our lives, and that we have a right to enjoy our life and work. Partly, this comes from a feeling that the people around us approve of us, which we may or may not be able to control. However, it also comes from the sense that we are behaving virtuously, that we're competent at what we do, and that we can compete successfully when we put our minds to it.[86]

Self-confident leadership leads to **boldness of action**, which is reflected in a willingness to try new things and to offer innovative ideas. It is difficult, if not impossible, to be a leader if one lacks the self-confidence to try new things and to take risks, and then to persuade others to do likewise.

Self-confident people do **inspire confidence and positive energy in others**. People aren't likely to unleash their creative power if they suffer from doubt about themselves. Self-confident people are usually inspiring, and people like to be around individuals who believe in themselves and what they're doing. It is unlikely that someone can influence people who do not have confidence in him or her, and it is difficult to inspire confidence in others if one doesn't have confidence in oneself. People follow those leaders because they speak about solutions with persuasive conviction, project confidence when others are uncertain, and act decisively.[87]

Some people believe that self-confidence can be built with affirmations and positive thinking. Although there is certainly some truth in this, it is just as important to build self-confidence by setting and achieving goals, thereby **building competence**. Without this underlying competence, it is likely that your self-confidence will erode into either over-confidence or a loss of confidence, with all of the negatives that this brings.

Leaders need a core sense of confidence that allows them to be comfortable receiving input from others, as was discussed under self-reflection. This includes, of course, hearing disagreement. It is important for a leader to have an open mind to **hear critical feedback** without allowing the message to become a personal criticism. Part of increasing one's capabilities involves

[86] http://www.mindtools.com/selfconf.html.
[87] Frances Hesselbein, et.al. *The Leader of the Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. P. 138.

developing feedback systems, both formal and informal, and acting upon the feedback received. A good leader is never above feedback or learning from others.

A self-confident leader must also have a **capacity for aloneness**.[88] Someone who dares to be out front of others has to be willing to carry the blame for mistakes and to sacrifice self-satisfaction on the altar of promoting the successes of others. Self-confident leaders are not threatened by the success of others in the organization.[89]

Self-confidence is built on **real achievement** accomplished by mastering significant skills and situations, and by knowing that you can add real value by the work you do. One of the best ways to improve your confidence is to become aware of all of the things you've already achieved.[90] Feeling more comfortable with one's accomplishments is a way to develop a surer sense of what one is able to offer others. One of the values of an effective leadership development program is the increase in the self-confidence of the participants. An organization cannot unleash the creative power of its people when they doubt themselves.

> *Exercise 9: An Assessment that helps determine your level of self-confidence can be found at:*
> http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_84.htm.

## Self-Directed

> *Before we can lead others, we must be able to lead ourselves first.* Kristi Staab, a leadership trainer.

**Self-directed** leaders choose to lead their lives by their own design, not by default.[91] They tend to have a clear sense of purpose, which is evidenced by their behavior. Work with a purpose affects performance in a very meaningful way. Leaders who are self-directed are very aware of their

[88] Charles Handy, "The New Language of Organizing and Its Implications for Leaders," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 9.
[89] Alfred C. DeCrane, Jr. "A Constitutional Model of Leadership." Frances Hesselbein, et.al. editors. *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p. 255.
[90] http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm.
[91] Kristi Staab, "Lead Like a Rock Star: Why Self-Directed Leaders Are Authentic Leaders," *Phoenix Business Journal*, March 27, 2013.

actions and behavior, and try to remain true to their values. Furthermore, a continuous effort is made to discover their "blind spots" and then work hard at bringing about needed change to be a more effective leader.

The willingness of self-directed leaders to be individuals who believe in themselves makes them stand out from the crowd. This courage is what allows them to pursue changes and to take on risk. It takes courage to be completely honest with oneself and to persevere when everything seems to be going wrong. However, courage to take a stand leads to enhanced self-respect, which is extremely important to any leader.

Self-directed leaders don't achieve this quickly or easily. It requires a willingness to reinvent themselves if they see that it is necessary. This reinvention comes about through an understanding of where one is in the leadership development process, and then being fully convinced that the achievement of positive personal attitudes, productive behaviors, appropriate competencies, and soft skills are critical to leadership success.

Following that conviction has to be a commitment to seek out opportunities to learn and grow. This requires making a conscious and continuous commitment to one's personal and professional development and growth over time. This can and should include being very observant of other leaders and refining their own competencies and skills based on what they are observing. Targeted observation can provide a model of a desired strength or help an individual who has a certain weakness better understand his/her behaviors as they relate to this weakness by observing others who have the same weakness.[92]

This learning process is not very effective unless a constant effort is then made to incorporate what has been learned into the future experiences of these leaders, and to create everyday opportunities for practicing what has been learned. It should be emphasized that this journey is not a series of stops with a final destination, and it isn't necessarily easy. Instead, it involves continual development that shapes and supports one's evolution as a leader, which is a never-ending process. Furthermore, past behavioral

[92] RHR Executive Insights, "Self-Directed Leadership Development, " Volume 20, #2. http://www.rhrinternational.com/100127/pdf/ei/V20N2-Self-Directed-Leader.pdf.

patterns are not easily changed, and, unless the reasons for these behaviors are dealt with, it is difficult to adopt new behaviors.

## Action- and Results-Oriented

*Leadership is action, not position.* Gerald Greenwald.

*You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do.* Henry Ford.

Leaders are proactive, not reactive. Getting things done and producing positive results is their mantra. You cannot be a leader if you are standing still or if you are content with things as they are. Productive leaders are an example to the people they lead, and their high level of productivity sets the standard for the rest of the organization.

It is the desire of effective leaders to convert the mission and vision of their organization into action. Following through on initiatives and promises is their consistent behavior. Furthermore, the approach of facilitative leaders involves convincing people that something can be done to achieve the desired results, not telling them what to do or doing the work for them.

On the other hand, observing a failure to act is likely to make good leaders upset. They will not accept the response that "we've never done it that way before." They also have a hard time accepting the reality that the vast majority of people in our society are reactive and avoid taking risks. This tends to eliminate the leadership potential of reactive people, who only work on what someone else requires them to do. This often leads to overlooking important tasks or putting them off in favor of more urgent lesser tasks.

**Figure 7: Assessing Results-Oriented Leadership in the Organization**[93]

| **Results-Oriented** | *Creates own measures of excellence.* | *Improves personal performance.* | *Contributes to work unit success.* | *Contributes to organizational success.* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowing what results are important; focusing resources to achieve them. | Uses own specific methods of measuring outcomes against a standard of excellence that exceeds established standards or expectations. | Makes specific changes in work methods and skills to improve personal performance and organizational results. | Improvement processes within the unit for the greater good of the organization. Commits significant resources to improve performance while taking action to minimize risks. | Demonstrates a clear understanding of all the factors affecting improvement of results within the organization. Analyzes all options. Initiates actions to optimize resources for the achievement of improved results. |
| | Administrative Support | | Professional | Managers |

## Communication

> *Leadership is a dialogue, not a monologue.* James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, in *The Leadership Challenge.*

An effective leader is constantly aware of the importance of good **communication**. Although communication is a competency that can be improved through the acquisition of certain skills, it is also a behavior that is considerably affected by attitude. This is demonstrated when a leader communicates that he or she cares about the people being communicated with.

> *I don't care what you know unless I know that you care.* Anonymous.

[93] http://www.financialcareers.gov.ab.ca/profiles/results-orientation.htm.

Among many successful leaders, the following behaviors relate to their interest in communicating with and influencing others:

- Actively solicits inputs from others to clarify issues and potential actions before acting;
- Takes action to help insure that key strategies, goals, and plans are understood by all team members;
- Provides important information quickly and accurately to internal and external customers;
- Acknowledges and addresses problems and issues in an honest, up-front, non-judgmental manner;
- Understands and responds appropriately to the underlying (often unexpressed) motivations, values, and concerns of others.[94]

Good communication is certainly one of the best ways to develop trust. If people feel that you are listening to them and that you understand and care about what they are saying, then they are more likely to trust you and open themselves up to you. In reality, listening is more of an attitude than it is a skill. If our efforts to become better listeners do not start with our attitudes toward whomever we need to hear, we will simply become better imposters and will not likely build a higher level of trust in our relationships.

As trust develops in the organization, people are encouraged to be more open in their communication and more willing to hear what others have to say. On the other hand, if management plays a strong authoritarian role, communication is inhibited and people tend to use it to advance their own personal agendas. Also, when there is considerable competition within the organization, communication is hindered. Generally, the quality of interpersonal relationships significantly affects the quality of communication.

The nature and effectiveness of all types of communication within an organization is important to building trust in the leadership. Every day is an opportunity to share news and relevant information among the

[94] http://www.yoursoulatwork.com/competencies.htm

organization's members and stakeholders. This transparency fosters improved trust.

Achieving effective communication can be accomplished by thinking through one's various organizational communication opportunities. The following questions might be asked in order to evaluate the communication process:

- What did you communicate and when?
- To whom?
- Via what means?
- How did employees and/or stakeholders respond?[95]

The point of this introspection is to get a better grasp on how transparent the leadership is with employees and stakeholders through the use of communication.

This interest in communication involves a number of dimensions that show others you are interested in communicating with them, which might be summarized as follows:

- Ears –- I hear what you say.
- Eyes –- I see how you are saying it.
- Mind –- I am trying to understand what you are saying.
- Heart –- I value you and what you are saying.

*Exercise 10: Positive Communication*

*As was pointed out in the text, much of effective communication is about attitude. Check those statements that indicate effective and positive communication:*

_____Could you explain that a little more for me?

_____Here is what you ought to do.

_____Why don't you try doing this?

[95] GE Capital's Action Resource Series in *Inc,* July/August 2013, p. 57.

_____If I were you . . .

_____You are always doing that.

_____Someone with your intelligence should know better than that.

_____We've tried that before and it didn't work.

_____What I hear you saying is . . .

_____Your report has a lot of mistakes in it.

_____I'm feeling angry about your comment.

_____I think I understand how difficult your situation is.

_____Have you tried this approach to your problem.

_____You make me mad.

_____That approach will never work.

_____What I would like to accomplish in this meeting is . . .

_____I would like to get a better idea of what you mean.

_____You have the attention span of a zucchini.

_____We all have crosses to bear.

_____That reminds of the time . . .

_____You sound like you're really frustrated.

_____Would it help if I . . .

_____I have to accept some of the blame for this problem.

_____I am really interested in reaching a mutually satisfactory solution to this problem.

_____I may have misinterpreted what you were saying.

_____Research indicates that . . .

_____The best solution is . . .

_____My experience tells me that . . .

_____You are not thinking very clearly.

_____You're talking like a bureaucrat.

_____What you really need is . . .

_____You are being a bit paranoid.

_____You'll feel different tomorrow.

_____Behind every cloud is a silver lining.

_____Don't worry so much about it.

_____Let's have lunch and forget about it.

_____You think you've got a problem!

_____Please tell me if you heard our conversation differently.

_____I get the impression that . . .

*In a meeting of the staff, discuss the results, particularly noting differences of opinion on certain statements. Finish up by talking about the implications of this exercise on improving organizational communication.*

## Respecting and Caring for Others

As was just discussed, interest in effective communication involves **caring about others**. Clearly, a strong leader must demonstrate that he or she cares about others, especially those who are his or her followers. John Maxwell has observed that *inexperienced leaders are quick to lead before*

*knowing anything about the people they intend to lead. Mature leaders listen, learn, and then lead.*[96]

Caring about others also means respecting them. A good leader treats everyone with **respect**, especially those who can't do anything for him/her. People will not sustain an interest in following those whom they fear or merely tolerate. Relationships within the organization will not be developed or maintained without a high level of mutual respect. A leader can develop a respect for others by trying to understand how people differ from each other and appreciate that difference.

**Acceptance** is a central issue in human relationships, and it is an essential element of organizational effectiveness as well. Acceptance involves regarding the other person as a worthy human being. Accepting others does not mean that you condone all of their behavior. Acceptance is of people, not their behavior. When you accept people, you are not critical of them just because you dislike how they act. You relate to others with acceptance when, even if you disapprove of their behavior, you communicate regard for them as persons.

It should not be assumed that people are inherently accepting. It is very difficult for most of us. We tend to be quick to pass judgment. Perhaps that's why many of our interpersonal relationships are less effective than we would like. Absence of acceptance leads quickly to a closing of communication. People who are unaccepting tend to evaluate and criticize, which can be negative behaviors that damage most relationships.

This respect for others can be demonstrated by a leader, therefore, by showing that he/she cares for them. People are particularly drawn to those leaders who have the ability to remember aspects of the personal lives of others, thereby showing his or her interest in them. However, it should also be pointed out that you can care for people without leading them. On the other hand, you cannot lead them effectively without caring for them.[97]

General Bill Creech, who revolutionized the Air Force approach to quality, expressed his view of how to lead people by one simple maxim: let your

[96] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 55.
[97] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 89.

people know that you genuinely care about them. With it, you have great latitude for forgiveness; without it, nothing else is important in leading people. A true leader will have the self-discipline to express sincere care about others.[98]

> *Taking an interest in what others are thinking and doing is often a much more powerful form of encouragement than praise.* Robert Martin.

Successful leaders not only build networks of relationships, but they also nurture the connections they make. They make time for their clients and colleagues. They make time for their personal relationships, especially for people they coach or mentor. It takes a great deal of energy to keep connections thriving, but successful people are willing to put in the time and the effort.

Building and nurturing relationships in the organization also helps in breaking down "silos" as people connect with one another and share what they know and experience on the job. Effective communication within the organization is critical to removing barriers to quality work and organizational excellence. When leadership in the organization fosters an attitude of caring for others, people are likely to feel liked, cared for, included, valued, and trusted. This encourages their working together with their leadership and with each other. Employees shift from a "have to" mindset to a "want to."

Good relationships also create energy within the organization, leading to more positive and sustainable outcomes. Once again, this begins with the leaders of the organization, who demonstrate that they want the best for its members.

> *Exercise 11: the following exercise is designed to evaluate your concern and caring for the members of your team or organization as leader of your staff.*
>
> - *Write a list of the names of the people on your team or in your organization.*

[98] Ray Blunt at http://govleaders.org/competency.htm.

- *For each individual, determine how well you know them by answering the following questions:*
  - *What three non-business things do you know about this person?*
  - *What does this person value?*
  - *What are this person's top three concerns?*
  - *What does this person want or hope for in life?*
  - *What does this person most enjoy doing at work?*[99]

## Willingness to Take Risks and Be Innovative

*The history of great leaders is the history of great risk takers.* John Spence.

One of the key behaviors of effective leaders is the **willingness to take risks** as they strive to be more creative. By definition, leaders are risk-takers. If there is no risk, little leadership is required. If the effort is easy and certain to succeed, anyone can, and probably will, "lead" it. But where the effort involves a risk of failure, then many people will back away from the challenge. Risk-taking leadership is necessary to get people to make the commitment and the effort to succeed. Strong leaders are not afraid to challenge the current situation. They don't need to "run with the crowd."

> *Leaders are pioneers – people who are willing to step out into the unknown. They are people who are willing to take risks, to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things.* James M Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner.

The attitude of effective leaders is that they are willing to embrace change and newness. They welcome problems and might even seek them out, meeting them as challenges and opportunities to improve the situation. Certainly, working hard to achieving desired results is extremely difficult when the situation is unstable, or the challenge is complex, or the direction is unclear. Many of today's organizational problems with respect to leadership are critical and pressing; they demand quick and decisive action. But at the same time, they are so complicated that it is dangerous to

[99] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 125.

move too quickly to address them. Because the organization, team, or individual often does not know exactly what to do, a need then exists to slow down, reflect on the situation, and approach it in an new way. This usually requires taking some risks and using innovative thinking.

**Innovative thinking** does not depend on past experience or well-known facts. It pictures a desired future state and figures out how to get there. It is intuitive and open to exploring a number of possibilities, focusing on asking the right questions rather than identifying the right or wrong answers. The goal is to find a better way of doing work and providing improved service by exploring various possibilities. It encourages the question, "*what if*?," which can lead to all sorts of exciting new approaches for the organization.

Innovative leaders show support and confidence in the work of others and value their contributions. They nurture and promote, when possible, creative people. Leaders encourage innovation when they protect and participate in the innovation process by neutralizing negative people, watching out for organizational systems and responses that quash innovation, and by using innovative thinking in their own work.[100]

Leadership in an organization does not have to create an environment of disruptive change to stimulate innovation. Instead, the focus should be on fostering the conditions that allow dynamic innovation approaches to emerge and flourish. Much of this can be accomplished by taking explicit steps to bring about an innovation culture within the organization based on trust among employees. In such a culture, people understand that their ideas are valued, they trust that it is safe to express those ideas, and they oversee risk collectively, together with their managers.[101] Leaders can reinforce this trust by involving employees in decisions that matter to them. Unfortunately, research demonstrates that only a minority of executives lead and manage innovation in their organization, and only a minority of employees appear to believe that their organizations accept failure as a means of learning.[102]

[100] http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/research/InnovationLeadership.pdf.
[101] http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/leadership_and_innovation.
[102] http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/leadership_and_innovation.

However, taking innovative risks does not involve taking on projects where there is no probability of success or projects that will be disruptive to the organization. The first step toward minimizing unnecessary risk is to acquire knowledge. The effective leader will gather as much relevant data that he or she reasonably can acquire in an acceptable time frame and mine it for new ideas. In addition, he or she will seek out advice and information from a large network of associates and mentors. With that approach, the leader is taking measured risks in an effort to improve the organization.

Additionally, it is likely to be destructive to the organization if its members are challenged to take risks that they are not committed to or that they are not feeling secure about. This situation can be minimized if the leadership approaches needed change through incremental steps and small wins. Little victories, when piled on top of each other, build confidence that even bigger challenges can be met.[103]

The leadership of an organization can take a number of practical steps to advance innovation, such as the following:

1. **Define the kind of innovation that drives growth and helps meet the strategic goals and actions of the organization.** For example, when senior executives ask for substantial innovation in the gathering of customer insights, the delivery of services, or the customer experience, they are communicating to employees the type of innovation they expect. In the absence of such direction, employees will come back with incremental thinking and ideas that are familiar to them.
2. **Add innovation to the formal agenda at regular meetings.** This sends an important message to employees about the value management attaches to innovation and provides an opportunity for productive brainstorming.

[103] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge.* San Francisco CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2007, p. 19.

3. **Set performance metrics and targets for innovation.** For example, targets could be established for generating new "prospect" activity implementing new ideas. These targets would need to be substantial enough to improve the organization's lead generation performance. Leaders can also set metrics to change ingrained behavior, such as the "it wasn't our idea" syndrome, by requiring a certain percentage of all ideas to come from external sources.[104]

Leaders willing to explore innovative processes are more likely to experience setbacks. It is important to be prepared for failure as an inherent component of risk but also to see the benefits to self and organization if failure does occur. It is important to view setbacks, or failed projects, as learning opportunities. A leader who successfully challenges the process must be able to take a failure and ask what has been learned in the process. Project post-mortems or after action reviews are essential for this. A good project leader will look for cause and effect in failures to learn what might be done differently in the future.

> *We don't have enough people out there making mistakes.* Thomas Watson, former CEO of IBM.

## Transparency

One quality valued in leaders is the ability to build an organization where **truth and transparency** prevail. A leader tells the truth in a real and genuine way that people can verify. He or she is open and authentic. The operational premise is that hidden agendas are detrimental to transparency. Information should flow freely within the organization and be shared as much as possible. Being transparent means that the leadership is telling its organizational members that they are being trusted with the information they are receiving.

Leaders often think that they're overwhelmingly honest, but many followers say otherwise. In leadership assessments, over 50% of almost 13,000 peers and direct reports felt their leaders could improve in being

[104] http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/innovation/leadership_and_innovation.

honest and ethical.[105] In all groups, leaders have a tendency to hoard and control information because they use it as a source of power and control. But the ability of top management to keep information secret is now vanishing, due in large part to the Internet and access to electronic communications. When leaders who are striving to be transparent decide not to share certain information with their followers for whatever reason, they should be honest and say something like: "I can't tell you that right now, but here's what I can say." Followers shouldn't have to wonder about hidden agendas.

When leaders practice transparency, they are demonstrating that "what you see is what you get." Transparency occurs when the organization as a whole sees what the leadership sees, and the vision and goals of the organization are clear to everyone in it. This clarity can be fostered through the use of performance measures and dashboards. This concern for clarity shows respect and concern both for the individuals within the organization and for the organization itself.

If the leaders make it acceptable to be open, are willing to listen to opposing points of view, and promise to consider the merits of others' arguments, the way is paved for a culture of transparency. As a result, amazing things occur. Organizations benefit from a more efficient and more collaborative process of decision-making and executing key actions because everyone is more informed. This speeds up operations, problems are identified more readily along the way, and accountability is improved. Subsequently, both the organization as a whole and the individual leader are perceived as having a higher level of credibility.

The Boards and stakeholders also have an important role in creating a culture of transparency. If they are not committed to the pursuit of honesty, clarity, and accountability, the organizations they serve are not likely to have a free flow of information either internally or externally.

[105] Karen Walker and Barbara Pagano, "Transparency: The Clear Path to Leadership Credibility," http://www.linkageinc.com/thinking/linkageleader/Documents/Karen_Walker_%20Barbara_Pagano_TRANSPARENCY_Is_the_Clear_Path_to_Leadership_Credibility_0105.pdf.

As part of this attitude of transparency, leaders need to create an environment that fosters people telling them the truth about themselves. Then, after having solicited honest feedback and acting on it, they need to ensure truth-telling exists from top to bottom. Adults can be trusted with the truth; yet, many organizations hide the truth because they don't trust that everyone is mature enough to handle it. Are we going to lay any people off? Will we be reorganized—again? How will the next promotion be decided? Truth-telling changes the entire climate of an organization, making it healthy and leading to a healthy culture for change where people trust the leader and each other without fear.

> *Trust happens when leaders are transparent.* Jack Welch, Former CEO, G.E.

A crucial element of transparency is figuring out just how open to be. It is important to know just how much to "hang on the line for all to see." Although too little transparency can exist, there also can be too much. When transparency is embraced without a good understanding of the potential effects of revealed information, it can be unfair and irresponsible both to the organization and to its individual members. Leaders have to have a firm finger on the pulse of their organization and its culture, knowing people's capacity to absorb information and anticipating how it might be interpreted and used. It is in part an artful use of intuition.[106]

Part of the attitude of committing to transparency is being willing to deliver bad news. This can be tricky business, yet doing it well is essential. When sensitive, controversial, or potentially hurtful information is not delivered well, people can feel betrayed, angry, and indignant. Trust is destroyed and relationships suffer. For most leaders, delivering bad news is difficult, and some even opt for silence. Those on the receiving end usually appreciate bad news that is delivered promptly and with honesty, directness, care, and concern.[107] The best leaders learn how to deliver bad

[106] Karen Walker and Barbara Pagano, "Transparency: The Clear Path to Leadership Credibility," http://www.linkageinc.com/thinking/linkageleader/Documents/Karen_Walker_%20Barbara_Pagano_TRANSPARENCY_Is_the_Clear_Path_to_Leadership_Credibility_0105.pdf.

[107] Karen Walker and Barbara Pagano, "Transparency: The Clear Path to Leadership Credibility," http://www.linkageinc.com/thinking/linkageleader/Documents/Karen_Walker_%20Barbara_Pagano_TRANSPARENCY_Is_the_Clear_Path_to_Leadership_Credibility_0105.pdf.

news kindly so people don't get unnecessarily hurt. It certainly is not easy to do this, and it is likely to take considerable practice to get good at it.

### *Exercise 12: Assessing Your Attitude about Transparency*

The following is a checklist that each individual in the organization can take to help assess if they're on the right track to transparency:[108]

__ Are you candid, honest and do you genuinely express your thoughts and opinions?
__ Does the message you are delivering remain the same, regardless of the audience?
__ Do you tell the truth in difficult situations?
__ When you can't divulge information, do you let people know why you can't disclose the information at that time?
__ Do you consistently keep commitments?
__ Do you handle your own defeats well, owning them and not blaming others?
__ Do you ask good questions, listen to the answers and remain open to new ideas?
__ Do you value the feedback of others?
__ Do you frequently ask others working with you, "How am I doing?" or, "What could I do to better support you?"

## Righting Wrongs

> *To bear with patience wrongs done to oneself is a mark of perfection, but to bear with patience wrongs done to someone else is a mark of imperfection and even of actual sin.* Thomas Aquinas.

A strong leader is always interested in making things right when he or she is wrong. The courage to admit error is characteristic of a leader who recognizes that lessons generated by failure are as valuable as those that come from success.

[108] Peter Barron Stark, "What Is Transparent Leadership?: http://www.peterstark.com/2011/transparent-leadership-2/.

If a leader does wrong someone, it is crucial to offer a quick and genuine apology, and it is helpful to make restitution where possible. Personal pride shouldn't get in the way of doing the right thing. It is easy to rationalize one's behavior, but a caring leader learns that sincerity is at the heart of an effective apology.

> *Watergate wasn't so much a burglary as it was the failure to recognize mistakes, to take responsibility for them, and to apologize accordingly.* Jon Huntsman, Chairman of the Huntsman Corp.

## Staying Focused

> *A good leader remains focused . . . Controlling your direction is better than being controlled by it.* Jack Welch, former General Electric chairman.

Leaders need to **focus** their attention. This is the ability to clearly set the competitive priorities for their organization in the marketplace and then focus the energy and resources of the organization toward the achievement of those priorities. The best leaders take complexity and bring simplicity to it through a focus on problem-solving and prioritization, or even just getting things into alignment. This is a behavioral pattern that leaders need to have. For example, Jim Collins' widely acclaimed book *Good to Great* concludes from his five years of research that the very best leaders (Level V as he refers to them) possess two competencies: a resolute and unflinching focus on the purpose of the organization coupled with a deep sense of humility.

One of the simpler ways to develop a stronger sense of focus is to use "to-do" lists. Making a to-do list at the beginning of every day or week can make you feel more focused and motivated to continue your work. If you make a list of all the things you have to do and then set priorities for them, no matter how small, you will feel more accomplished when you check those items off your list and move on to the next task. This will also keep you focused on one task at a time, and the prioritization will ensure that the most important tasks get done.

Some additional tips to help in becoming more focused and productive include:[109]

1**. Do creative work first**. Typically, we do our simplest work first and build up to the toughest tasks. That drains your energy and lowers your focus. In order to focus effectively, reverse the order. Check off the tasks that require creativity or concentration first thing in the morning, and then move on to easier work, like deleting emails or scheduling meetings, later in the day.

2. **Allocate your time deliberately**. Research demonstrates that people are truly focused for an average of only six hours per week. That is why it is so important to use that time wisely for important things in the organization. It is often helpful to discover where and when you do your best thinking, and allocate your most difficult decisions to that time and/or place.

3. **Train your mind to avoid distractions**. When multitasking is the norm, your brain quickly adapts. However, you lose the ability to focus as distraction becomes a habit. Practice concentration by turning off all distractions and committing your attention to a single task. Start small, maybe five minutes per day, and work up to larger chunks of time. If you find your mind wandering, just return to the task at hand.

> *If you chase two rabbits, both will escape.* Unknown.

## Responding Quickly with Agility

> *Five to ten years ago you would set your vision and strategy and then start following it. That does not work anymore. Now you have to be alert every day, week, and month to renew your strategy.* Pekka-Ala Pietilä, (President of Nokia in the early 2000s).

With all the gains in technology, customer and stakeholder response time has become an absolute critical success factor. Delivering great products and services too late is the same as not delivering them at all. Being slow in response to customer needs is the best news you can give your competitors.

[109]Nadia Goodman, "How to Train Your Brain to Stay Focused,": http://www.entrepreneur.com/blog/225321.

Being slow in response to stakeholder needs is likely to lead to dissatisfaction and funding problems. Creating and executing with a sense of urgency is a fundamental requirement for success as a leader.

**Agility** is the ability to adapt rapidly to shifts in the marketplace, in customer demands, and in technology. Organizations that are successfully led do not just cope with change. They ride the wave of change like a surfer, with the same agility and flexibility to shift without missing a beat.[110]

## A Positive Attitude

> *Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.* Albert Schweitzer.

A **positive mindset** is also associated with strong leadership. All leaders need to be purveyors of hope. If leaders are to be inspiring, they need to be enthusiastic, energetic, and positive about the future. This demonstrates the leader's personal commitment to pursuing the vision. If you're a positive and optimistic person who tries to make the best of any situation, you'll find it much easier to stimulate people to do their best.

> *The good man chooses what is positive, what is advancing, embraces the affirmative.* Ralph Waldo Emerson.

However, being positive is much more than presenting a smiley face to the world. A strong sense of balance is also needed, along with the recognition that setbacks and problems happen. It's how you deal with problems that makes the difference.

Positive people approach situations realistically, prepared to make the changes necessary to overcome a problem. Negative people, on the other hand, often give in to the stress and pressure of the situation. This can lead to fear, worry, distress, anger, and failure. Being a person who looks for innovative ways to operate requires a leader with a "glass half full" attitude rather than "half empty."

[110] http://www.wsa-intl.com/242-4-critical-leadership-competencies-how-to-develop-them/.

*Exercise 13: An Exercise in Positive Thinking*

*For a full day, listen to what you say and what those around you say. Keep score on the number of times you use and hear reactive phrases such as: "I can't," "If only," That's not possible," "If I could just have."*

## Clarity

> *More important than the quest for certainty is the quest for clarity.* Francois Gautier, French writer and journalist.

Ambiguity can be a leader's undoing. If the direction and purpose of a leader isn't clear, it is difficult to see how the organization's daily activities are moving it in the right direction. In a complex world, it is even more important to take difficult decisions and communicate them in simple terms that are readily understood. Furthermore, many of the behaviors of an exceptional leader, such as authenticity, trust, acting with confidence, etc., are derived from **clarity**.

Achieving clarity takes some work and some time. This behavior isn't automatic. Self-reflection, discussed earlier, is one means for thinking through a situation or issue and sorting out the important essentials from all of the clutter that often surrounds anything requiring a decision. It is also helpful to practice working systematically through complex ideas in order to simplify and clarify their core meanings.

When a leader is clear in his or her expectations and desired outcomes, it is much more likely that he or she will get what is wanted. When we are clear about the priorities we are pursuing, we tend to be much more productive and effective. Being clear about our purpose, core values, and vision enables us to answer tough questions, make faster decisions, and move forward with confidence.

Clarity on the part of leadership also means that the appropriate amount of time is taken to ensure that the right people are in the right jobs and know what they need to accomplish. This clarity helps followers believe that they are moving to a desired future, which reduces misunderstanding and

garners trust. Successful organizations have leaders that clearly value their people and keep the purpose of the organization in focus. This clarity within a team or organization regarding their purpose helps them accomplish together that which is being sought after.

*Exercise 14: An Exercise in Changing Behavior*

*For each of the behaviors previously discussed in this chapter, identify each behavior that you wish to change, the barriers to making that change, and the positive actions you would need to take.*

| **Behaviors I Wish to Change** | **Barriers to Making that Change** | **Positive Actions I Need to Take** |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

# Chapter 6

## CRITICAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES - WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL LEADER?

### Introduction

Behaviors are what you as an individual do that others see or experience. Competencies are general areas of proficiency that you have that impact your behaviors and your style of leadership. Although the terms competencies and skills are often interchanged, for the purposes of this book skills are defined as specific capabilities that support an overall competency.[111] Competencies usually require years of continual learning to master, and, certainly, specific leadership skills are not learned overnight. The successful leaders are those that have the self-discipline and perseverance to "stay the course."

Gaining personal proficiency over one's behavior so that new competencies can be acquired requires several steps. Firstly, one has to have an awareness of his/her existing behavior patterns. In order to learn new behavior, an individual must first recognize that he/she is not effective in some particular aspect of organizational activity. This means moving from **unconscious incompetence** (I don't know that I am ineffective) to **conscious incompetence** (through feedback, or in some other way, I become aware that I am not achieving what I want to achieve when I behave in a certain way).

Subsequent to gaining one's behavior awareness, it is then possible and important to understand and to improve upon one's range of behaviors. This involves making a careful examination of one's leadership experiences and reflecting on what needs to be changed in one's choices and performance. This means moving beyond awareness into aggressive application of new learning through ongoing practice.

[111] Caela Farren and Beverly L. Kaye, "New Skills for New Leadership Roles." Frances Hesselbein, et.al.editors. *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p.186.

At first, the new behaviors may seem strange. But over time, they become habitual. Through practice, the individual has transformed the behavior from **conscious competence** ("I have to think about how to do it"**)** to **unconscious competence** ("It's a habit, and I don't have to think about how to do it once I intend to do so").

> *In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.* Max De Pree

Most of us could benefit from a checklist of core competencies - something we can carry around in our electronic gadgets. When appropriate, we could glance at this checklist to diagnose what's happening when we see others performing successfully or unsuccessfully. The checklist can help us learn in real time what works and doesn't work. It can also be a valuable self-assessment tool. When we succeed or fail at a leadership or communications attempt, we can later sit quietly at our desk and pinpoint what we specifically did or failed to do that influenced what happened.

To maintain effectiveness as a leader, an individual needs to continuously work at being aware of his/her competency strengths and development needs. This also includes making an effort to understand how he/she is perceived by others. This is not necessarily a "natural act" on one's part, which is why it takes an enlightened awareness and continuous effort to make it happen.

Furthermore, given that "different folks need different strokes," no one leadership style exists that works in every situation. Leadership effectiveness can be measured in terms of how successful the leader is in adapting his or her behavior to the situation at hand. Generally, the stronger one's base of competencies, the more adaptable a leader can be.

From extensive research of the literature, it is possible to distill the key competencies that are likely to be critical for the leader in these complex times. These are discussed in the rest of this chapter.

**Possesses clarity of direction**

> *Anyone can steer the ship, but it takes a leader to chart the course.* John Maxwell.
>
> *The first task of a leader is to help define reality.* Max DePree.

An effective leader needs to gain the kind of perspective on the future that leads to an anticipation of change and a planning for what is expected to come. Their clear image of the future then pulls them forward. An organization can drift aimlessly if it doesn't have a purpose that excites its members. No one wants to follow someone who's lost. The leaders not only must have clarity of direction, but also must communicate it in such a way that fosters buy-in from every level of the organization. This sense of direction needs to help others to achieve an expanded awareness of what the future might bring and the need to prepare for it.

> *Leaders are bridges that connect people to the future.*[112]

The competency this requires is the ability to study and learn from key trends that are occurring and how they might impact the community, its organizations, and people's career options. A leader needs to spend more of each day thinking about tomorrow if the future is going to be an improvement over the present. This requires an individual to be an ongoing learner who studies the news, relevant articles and books, and the media for signs of changes that aren't generally recognized. From all of this, the leader sets out his or her intentions and desired outcomes. It is all about what having a clear idea of where the organization should be headed based on more than ego or emotions.

Chapter 9 of this book will expand on the concept of a "visionary leader."

**Has the ability to inspire others to high performance**

Doesn't every leader want to know how to energize people to go the extra mile? However, we know that this motivation comes from within the

[112] Caela Farren and Beverly L. Kaye, "New Skills for New Leadership Roles." Frances Hesselbein, et.al.editors. *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p.186.

individual. But we also know that a leader can positively influence people to be more energized and motivated by such measures as the following:

a. Start by learning how to empower individuals, which creates an environment that makes it possible for other people to motivate themselves.
b. Help people develop their own specific plans for how they will accomplish their goals as they relate to those of the organization, and regularly ask them how they're progressing and what you can do to help them.
c. Express confidence in others and demonstrate enthusiasm to them by talking about why the organization's goals are important.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.* John Quincy Adams.

## Communicates well and listens intensively

*Seek first to understand, then to be understood.* Stephen R. Covey.

The ability to communicate clearly so that you can create understanding between yourself and others is perhaps the single most important leadership competency to possess.[113] It is difficult to achieve effective decision-making and problem-solving in an organization without good communication. Furthermore, the purpose of communication is not just to share information, but more importantly to share *meaning*. Clearly, it isn't of much value for a leader to have a vision or sense of direction if he or she can't communicate the value or meaning of that vision to others and inspire them to buy into it.

Therefore, an effective leader realizes that in order for communication to be effective, it should be a *two-way* process between the leader and the followers, or, said in another way, between the sender and receiver. Effective communication is a match between the message intended and the message heard. That means that any important communication should be

[113] John B. Spence, *Excellence by Design – Leadership.* Adbiz. p. 85.

carefully thought out in terms of both content and quantity. Leaders should decide what particular pieces of information people really need to know, and then state that information simply and clearly in an open and straightforward way.

In addition, the goal of mutual understanding between sender and receiver should be achieved by using whatever means of communication necessary. An effective communicator also knows what communication modes and skills to use to help those receiving the message understand it more clearly. The competence of communication includes knowing what means or modes or skills to use, how they have been used in similar situations in the past, and being able to determine which means of communication have the highest probability of success in a given situation. Competence is all about appropriateness and effectiveness leading up to achieving the objectives of the conversation for both the communicator and the other parties involved.

An effective communicator must work hard to master all of the various means of communication in order to be fully competent. This includes the ability to speak clearly in ordinary conversations so that one's point is gotten across. It also involves public speaking and the ability to persuade an audience with respect to desired outcomes. Body language and nonverbal cues are an additional component of effective communication. In this age of Twitter, texting, and emails, the value of the written word has become all the more important to ensure clarity and professionalism.

Most people in general and leaders in particular find that verbal communication is critical to their life and work. Studies about how much time is spent communicating in organizations have reveal that about 70 percent of the working hours involve some kind of verbal communication. On average, this time breaks down as follows:

- Writing -- 9%
- Reading -- 16%
- Speaking -- 30%
- Listening -- 45%

*When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen.* Ernest Hemingway.

Clearly, listening is critical to good communication, but most of us focus on working on the other verbal communication competencies to become more proficient in them. Benjamin Disraeli was undoubtedly right when he observed, *talk to a man about himself and he will listen for hours*. The other party in the conversation will think you are a remarkable conversationalist. Furthermore, listening increases likeability, and likeability leads back to trust in you as a leader.

As important as listening is in our communication, it is amazing how little we practice it. As was pointed in an earlier chapter, we spend most of our waking hours communicating, which involves reading, writing, speaking, non-verbal communication, and listening. In school we learned to read and write, and possibly even how to speak more effectively. However, how much time was spent in learning to listen, so that you really understand what another person is saying from their perspective or frame of reference? Typically, we seek first to be understood, which means that we don't listen as much as we need to with the intent to understand.

In effective listening, it is critical to find out what the most important behaviors you as a leader can demonstrate to the people you're working with. Don't assume you know what matters most to others, and don't presume you have all the answers, or even all the questions.

> *Nothing beats personal, two-way communication for fostering cooperation and teamwork and for building an attitude of trust and understanding among employees.* Bill Packard, Co-Founder, Hewlett Packard.
>
> *We've all heard the criticism, 'He talks too much.' When was the last time you heard someone criticized for listening too much?* Norm Augustine, Former CEO, Lockheed Martin.

Clearly, effective listening is a communication approach that reflects a positive attitude and that facilitates collaboration. Some of the key communication skills that lead to increased competency in this area will be covered in the next chapter dealing with leadership skills.

Unfortunately, despite every effort we might make to communicate more effectively, the truth of the matter is that we can only influence, but not control, how we communicate. Ultimately, our audience decides what we

have communicated to them.

> *The problem with communication is the illusion that it is complete.* George Bernard Shaw.

Although no one can know with complete certainty how his or her message is being received, the best communicators usually have a strong awareness of the situation in which they find themselves, and are good at reading the people with whom they are communicating. The key is their ability to adapt their message to their "audience" without missing a beat. Furthermore, good communicators value brevity and clarity, working hard to make their words count.

> *Exercise 15: Assessing Communication Competence.*
>
> *Go to the following website to self-assess your communication competence using the Spitzberg & Cupach quiz: http://www.austincc.edu/colangelo/1318/interpersonalcommunicationcompetence.htm.*

**Demonstrates a collaborative orientation**

The traditional hierarchy of leadership in organizations has been focused on commanding and directing staff. This is increasingly evolving into staff empowerment. With this empowerment comes the need to figure out how to get people to "grab hold and run with the ball that is being handed to them."[114] This requires developing a collaborative structure that facilitates team-based decision-making. Collaboration is a competency that usually needs to be developed, since it is not part of our normal way of dealing with organizational activity (or even our personal relationships).

The attitude and competency of a leader in dealing with others can greatly help set the tone for collaboration and teamwork within a group or within the organization as a whole. For example, a leader can bring the group together to discuss ways to work more effectively as a team, such as:

[114] Ken Blanchard, *Self Leadership and the One Minute Manager*, William Morrow & Co.: New York, 2005, p. xiii.

a. Designing projects that require cooperation, then encourage direct contact between team members.
b. Giving credit to the group for team accomplishments.
c. Avoiding acting as the center of problem-solving for your group, but not hesitating to roll up your sleeves and help others when they need it.[115]

As was just mentioned, collaboration is not a "natural act" for human beings. It requires us to think about things differently than we are used to, which is not easy. To begin with, we may find it difficult to gauge the benefits of changes that we are not familiar with, especially with respect to working together with others. Since other people are likely to have agendas different than ours, it is natural to be suspicious of them and their motives. We typically think: "How can we be sure we won't be taken advantage of."

Collaboration, therefore, requires a deliberate act of will. It has to be initiated by someone who really wants to collaborate and who sees the value of people or organizations working together. In other words, it takes a leader to begin the collaborative process. Collaboration doesn't just happen.

As difficult as true collaboration is to achieve, the benefits are well worth the effort. Effective teamwork is the primary result, which is demonstrated in shared accountability, shared priorities and goals, shared problem-solving, and shared decisions. All of this results in better outcomes. Being a leader does not mean being the only member of the organization that is able to make all decisions and that is accountable for results. It really means the ability to facilitate an effective collaborative process.

Chapter 10 of this book will deal with the subject of how to become a collaborative and enabling leader.

[115] http://www.trainingmag.com/article/leaders-look-improve-people-skills.

**Works to develop people**

One of the things only leaders can do is to grow the next generation of leaders in their organization. Putting people in challenging and different work situations and coaching them is something only a leader can pull off. Leaders need to be good at being a coach or mentor to facilitate learning from experience, at being a teacher in the workplace during teachable moments, and above all at being an example. Although learning is a personal experience, leadership in an organization can foster a learning environment that encourages others to learn from their experiences. This environment can be created by:

- being willing to delegate meaningful tasks, which means sharing and getting an agreement or commitment from others to accept the task;
- building the visibility and credibility of junior people by discussing their accomplishments with others in the organization;
- Helping others refine their career development plans;
- Giving honest and candid feedback in a helpful way.

If the leadership does not take this approach, they will fail to build the capacity to tackle tough jobs in their organization. If the leader is devoted primarily to his/her own care and advancement, the organization itself will not prosper.

> *A great leader doesn't do the work of ten, he teaches ten to do the work that is needed.*

Chapter 11 will elaborate on this theme of building leadership within the organization, including understanding the different levels of leadership that are likely to exist.

**Has the ability to think creatively**

> *Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there will be to know and understand.* Albert Einstein.

The innovative behavior of leaders depends to a great extent on their

willingness and competency to think creatively. Creative thinking is the process we use to develop ideas that are unique and often have practical applications. The generation of new ideas evolves out of a process of combining, changing, or reapplying existing ideas. People moving into leadership positions should be committed to develop the ability to think innovatively, or "out-of-the-box" to use a tired phrase.

Everyone can learn how to move beyond their current set of assumptions and mindsets that limit how they view and understand problems and issues. Creativity involves seeing new possibilities, finding connections between ideas that seem unconnected, and reframing the way people think about an issue (their paradigms).[116] From a leadership perspective, the ability to think creatively enables leaders to contribute innovative insights that can open up new opportunities or alternatives for an organization.

Creative thinking can often be facilitated by using introspective questions to open up new approaches to organizational problems. These could include the following:

- What would happen that isn't happening now?
- What would the future situation look like if it were to change?
- What decisions would need to be made and implemented?
- What would we need to accomplish beyond what we are currently doing?
- What patterns of behavior that are currently in place would need to be eliminated?[117]

Although it seems cumbersome, creative people have discovered the value of keeping track of their ideas at all times. A creative thought could come unexpectedly, and, if not written down, could quickly become forgotten. This author has talked with songwriters who wake up in the middle of the night with an idea for a song and then make sure they capture it on paper right then and there. It is also helpful to challenge yourself to pose new questions every day with respect to personal, professional, and organizational activity.

[116] Ellen Van Velsor, et.al. "Our View of Leadership Development." Cynthia D. McCauley, et.al. editors. *The Center for Creative Leadership: Handbook of Leadership Development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998, p. 20.
[117] http://www.umich.edu/~elements/probsolv/strategy/thinkers.htm.

Creativity can also evolve out of diligent research on the Internet and in books and magazines that demonstrate new ways of dealing with old problems. The same can be said for going to conferences and training workshops with the intent of discovering some new approaches to organizational excellence. It is also often helpful to learn things outside of traditional economic development and try to apply that knowledge to your organizational activity. The more open your mind is to new ways of thinking, the greater the possibilities of developing new solutions to how the organization can improve its performance.

Unfortunately, many people don't believe in their creative capacity. If you fail to believe that you are creative, it is unlikely you will be so. Someone who denies their creative ability is not likely to pursue learning how to become creative. The reality is that believing you are not creative excuses you from trying or attempting anything new.[118]

*Exercise 16: Thinking Creatively*

*Your work group or the organization as a whole should meet for an hour or so and take on a challenging topic of relevance to the organization, such as identifying new business prospects for the community. The goal is to collaboratively generate creative ideas rather than rehashing the current approaches. This is a brainstorming session where each person tries to build on the ideas of another person in a group process. These ideas are not to be evaluated for their merit, but explored as new possibilities that haven't been tried by the organization.*

**Possesses intelligence and learning agility**

The ability to think innovatively doesn't just happen. It requires an intelligent pursuit of new ideas. Effective leaders are those who are capable of and interested in continuous learning and improving, both for themselves and for their followers. The motivation to learn is an attitude; the ability to learn is a competency. From their experience leaders learn to

[118]http://www.creativitypost.com/create/twelve_things_you_were_not_taught_in_school_about_creative_thinking.

recognize when new behaviors, skills, or attitudes are called for to deal with a problem or issue or situation.

Leaders who are intellectually stimulating tend to continually ask questions, constantly probing for information about the effectiveness of the organization. They talk to their constituents and customers and listen carefully to them before making up their own mind. Assessment and feedback are critical if people are to recognize that the competencies and their associated skills they currently possess are insufficient. Getting reliable information continuously about how they are doing is an important way for people to know that change is necessary.

The motivation to learn is unlikely when people are comfortable with their current way of thinking and doing. When faced with a new challenge, most people tend to draw on what they already know or respond in the way that they usually do. Furthermore, the more expert and specialized a person becomes, the more his/her mindset becomes narrowed and the more fixated he/she becomes on confirming what they believe to be correct. Consequently, when confronted with new and different ideas, the focus will be on conformity. Does this idea conform with what he or she knows is right? If not, management and staff will spend all their time showing and explaining why it can't be done and why it can't work.[119]

Even the approach to learning how to be more creative may not be as effective as it could be if an individual has a narrow and fixed mindset. With that attitude, he or she will not look for ways to make it work or get it done because this might demonstrate that what he/she regarded as positively and absolutely correct is not that way at all. Conversely, a creative person wants to know what is working and what is not. An important source of information for this type of leader is to know about the failures and mistakes that are being made so that they can be learned from and corrected.[120]

> *The leader must know, must know he knows, and must be able to make it abundantly clear to those about him that he knows.* Clarence B. Randall.

[119]http://www.creativitypost.com/create/twelve_things_you_were_not_taught_in_school_about_creative_thinking.

[120] John Bryson and Barbara C. Crosby. *Leadership for the Common Good: Tackling Public Problems in Shared-Power World.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 3.

The ability to acquire knowledge and to reason more effectively can be learned and developed, as well as becoming competent at applying this intelligence to real-world, day-to-day activities. It is dangerous to assume that your existing base of knowledge, competency, and skills will be sufficient for tomorrow's challenges.

> *The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.* Alvin Toffler.
>
> *If you do what you've always done, you will get what you've always gotten.*

Therefore, it is important for leaders to assess how they currently learn, to understand other ways to gain new competencies and skills, and to make the opportunity to experiment with new learning tactics. This approach can help them develop the flexibility and responsiveness they need to build on the experience they have acquired.[121]

## Is capable of creating a culture of excellence

Successful and sustainable organizations are likely to possess a strong and well-defined culture. Organizational culture is a composite of values, beliefs, practices, shared meanings, rituals and celebrations, and history of the organization that combine to make an organization unique. Although the organization's culture is derived from the activity and behavior of the entire organization, its leadership plays the most critical role in shaping it. Schein states that *the only thing of importance that leaders do is create and manage culture* and *the unique talent of leaders is their ability to understand and work within the culture*.[122] It would appear that *only through leadership can an organization truly develop and nurture a culture that is adaptive to change*.[123]

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[121] Ellen Van Velsor, et.al. "Our View of Leadership Development." Cynthia D. McCauley, et.al. editors. *The Center for Creative Leadership: Handbook of Leadership Development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998, p. 23.

[122] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992.

[123] James C. Sarros, et.al., "Building a Climate for Innovation Through Transformation Leadership and Organizational Culture," *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies,* Volume 15, No. 2, November 2008, p. 145.

> *Culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual. We can see the behavior that results, but often we cannot see the forces underneath that cause certain kinds of behavior.* Edgar H. Schein in his book *Organizational Culture and Leadership*.

On the pathway to changing an organization's culture, it is certainly worth it for leadership to make the effort to first understand the existing culture. Clearly, leaders would find it difficult to communicate and implement new visions and inspire follower commitment to those visions if they didn't have a deep understanding of the nature of the organization's existing culture and the impact of it. If they understand its culture, they can use it in a number of positive ways, such as by:

- Developing organizational strategies that are more likely to be implemented;
- Setting guidelines for how managers and staff should interact with their constituents and customers;
- Making staffing decisions;
- Setting performance criteria;
- Guiding the nature of acceptable interpersonal relationships in the organization; and,
- Selecting appropriate management styles.[124]

Furthermore, the degree to which the organization's culture is determined or influenced by its leaders and managers is important to understanding the culture itself. For example, if the behavior that is demonstrated by the leader(s) (which includes the Board and the management) is not geared toward achieving "excellence," the staff will soon quit striving to produce high quality services.

It is generally accepted that the leadership of an organization influences to a great extent:

- how the organization is known to its customers, employees, and others;
- what makes the people in the organization feel successful; and,

[124] Judith R. Gordon, *Organizational Behavior: A Diagnostic Approach*, Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River NJ, 1999, pp. 345-346.

- what it feels like to work for the organization.

Furthermore, what management emphasizes, rewards, and reprimands can tell the members of the organization what is really valued.

The excellent leader will be one who creates an organizational culture or a value system centered upon principles of good management and leadership.[125] As was stated earlier, leaders are in the strongest position to shape the culture of the organization, and they need to have the competency to do so. The basic assumptions of how things work there, what is important, what is valued, and what differences exist between the values espoused and lived out by top management are all elements of organizational culture. It is a leader's job to understand what that culture is, how to change it if necessary, and how to leverage that culture toward excellent performance of services for customers, clients, and stakeholders.

> *Innovation is the engine of change . . . (and) culture is a primary determinant of innovation.* P. K. Ahmed.

It has been said that *culture is the fine sand that can destroy the gears of change, gradually grinding to a halt any effort to make things better.*[126] Only leaders can deal with this, yet it is one of the most complex of problems and demands persistent attention. A positive culture on the other hand becomes a competitive advantage that competitors cannot easily duplicate. Southwest Airlines is a good case in point. All airlines basically do the same things, but somehow Southwest has created a climate (or culture) where from the pilot to the baggage handler, they simply seem to do it better.[127]

Most managers, unfortunately, do not take culture into account as they devise plans and strategies for developing leaders in their organizations. One reason for this neglect is the difficulty that most people have in recognizing their own organizational cultures and the impact it plays in fostering leadership opportunities. In reality, the culture defines the kind of leadership that is acceptable for the organization.

[125] Stephen R. Covey, "Three Roles of the Leader in the New Paradigm." Frances Hesselbein, et.al. editors. The Leader of the Future. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p. 149.
[126] http://govleaders.ort/competency.htm.
[127] Ray Blunt at http://govleaders.org/competency.htm.

However, failing to acknowledge the crucial role that organizational culture plays in developing leaders can have a long term negative impact on this important goal. Typically, the culture that results from the policies and procedures that evolve out of an organization's core functions reinforces those functions at the expense of effective leadership development practices, the organization's long term interests, and its development goals.[128] The value of leadership is its ability to work outside of the existing culture that created these leaders and start a process of changing that culture to be more adaptable and transformative.

## Practices Consistent Discipline

> *Discipline is the refining fire by which talent becomes ability.* Roy L. Smith.

The leadership competency that is valued in Jim Collins' (*Good to Great*) research above all others is that of **discipline**, which is both self-discipline and organizational discipline. Merriam-Webster defines discipline as *training that is expected to produce a specific character or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement*. Discipline is both an attitude and a competency.

The word "discipline" actually means "being a disciple unto oneself." When we are disciples unto ourselves, we try to stay true to what we believe in, ask for the help that we might need, and consistently make sure that the needed actions are done. Furthermore, we do this in a step-by-step way. After all, if you cannot lead yourself, you won't be successful at leading others. Discipline is what drives someone to do what's right when no one is watching.

Leaders who have strong self-discipline tend to be well-organized, and they demonstrate willpower and determination in everything they do. The very act of being well-organized, of having clear goals, and of having set clear priorities on one's activities before beginning, provides a sense of discipline and control. It also leads to people's respect and admiration. When self-discipline is practiced by persisting in the face of difficulties,

[128] Vidula Bal and Laura Quinn, "The Missing Link: Organizational Culture and Leadership Development." http://www.ccl.org/leadership/pdf/publications/lia/lia2104link.pdf.

especially demonstrating a willingness to do things others are not willing to do, influence over others increases.[129] Hard work is "hard," but it does pay huge dividends.

A good example of the importance of self-discipline is Gary Player, one of the past great international golfers. When someone once said to him: "I'd give anything if I could hit a golf ball like you," he responded: "No, you wouldn't. You'd give anything to hit a golf ball like me, if it were easy." Player then listed the things one would have to do in order to achieve his level of play: "You've got to get up a five o'clock in the morning, go out and hit a thousand golf balls, walk up to the club house to put a bandage on your hand where it started bleeding, then go and hit another thousand golf balls. That's what it takes to hit a golf ball like me."[130]

> *A man's true greatness lies in the consciousness of an honest purpose in life, founded on a just estimate of himself and everything else, on frequent self-examinations, and a steady obedience to the rule which he knows to be right, without troubling himself with what others might think or say, or whether they do or do not do that which he thinks and says.* Marcus Aurelius.

## Delivers results

A leader establishes a track record of results and gets the right things done. It is important to make things happen and accomplish what you're expected to do. But one shouldn't overpromise and under-deliver, or make excuses for not delivering.[131]

Being able to deliver results is the mark of a competent leader. If followers doubt the leader's ability to deliver, they are less likely to continue to follow. They must believe that the person is capable and effective and

[129] http://www.briantracy.com/blog/leadership-success/top-leaders-maintain-high-expectations-and-self-discipline-personal-power/.
[130] Adapted from James Emery White, *You Can Experience . . A Spiritual Life*, *Nashville: Word Publishing*, *1999*, *p. 201.*
[131] http://www.missionfacilitators.com/Articles/Executive%20Coaching/Tools/13%20Behaviors%20Handout%20about%20Trust.pdf.

knows what he/she is doing if they are going to follow him/her. Having a winning track record is the surest way to be considered competent.[132]

The type of competence that followers look for seems to vary with the leader's position and the condition of the organization. For example, the higher the rank of the leader, the more people demand to see demonstrated abilities in such competencies as strategic planning and decision-making.[133]

## Clarifies expectations

Closely tied to the competency of delivering results is meeting expectations. However, before one can satisfactorily meet expectations, one must first know what they are. One of the biggest problems in relationships is the lack of understanding of expectations. Unclear or ambiguous expectations regarding desired results undermine communication and trust. They need to be discussed and validated as soon as possible in all relationships, and particularly in professional settings. If necessary and possible, they can be renegotiated. It should never be assumed that expectations are clear to others or shared by others. The concept of "seek first to understand, then to be understood" is one of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.[134]

*Almost all conflict is a result of violated expectations*. Blaine Lee.

Sometimes it is good to be reminded that the people you work with are not mind readers. They may not be clearly aware of your expectations of them. The more clearly you can articulate and demonstrate your expectations, the more satisfied you will be when it comes to their performance and your working relationships.

A clearly articulated set of employee expectations may seem like unnecessarily stating the obvious to many people. However, it is important

[132] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987, p.19.
[133] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987, p.19.
[134] Stephen Covey. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster; 1998: pp.146–182.

that it isn't assumed that others understand what is being expected of them. Removing any doubt or speculation builds clarity and improves the working relationship. The following are three questions that can lead to an improved understanding of management expectations by employees. [135]

> **1. Do people know what is expected of them?** Too often it is assumed that people know what they are supposed to be doing within the organization. People may know their tasks, but often lack knowledge about how what they do helps the entire organization. For example, if an employee works in marketing, he or she needs to know how vital his or her job is to the successful performance of the organization. People need to be told and then reminded of the importance of their work.
>
> **2. Do employees know what they can expect from you?** It is important to let employees know that you as their manager are available to them. How you define "available" may vary from employee to employee. For new hires, you might be more teacher than boss. For experienced employees, you may play the coaching role. For the team, you will be the supplier of resources as well as their champion.
>
> **3. Do employees know what is expected of each other?** While managers need to make certain employees are doing what is asked of them, employees must also do their part to coordinate with each other. Whether a self-managed team makes its own assignments or a manager makes the assignments, what matters most is that employees know who does what so work can be completed in a timely and responsible fashion.

Clearly, expectations cannot be better understood without discussion between management and employees. The following table demonstrates how this discussion might proceed under different scenarios.[136]

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[135] John Baldoni, "Ask Three Questions to Clarify Expectations." http://blogs.hbr.org/2009/08/three-questions-to-clarify/.

[136] "Clarifying Performance Expectations," State of Louisiana Manual for Management in State Government:

**Figure 8: Discussing Expectations**

| In this situation: | Cover this in the discussion: |
|---|---|
| The organization has announced a change in direction, or needs to align efforts to meet important goals. | Discuss responsibilities that have changed, any additional responsibilities, and any shift in priorities. |
| A new work flow cycle has begun. | Discuss all of the person's responsibilities with a focus on those that are high priority. |
| The person is new to the organization, work group, role, or assignment. | Discuss all of the person's responsibilities with a focus on those that are high priority and how they fit into the organization's goals. Move beyond duties and responsibilities and enter into the realm of very clear and specific expectations. These include the following: How do you specifically define success? How do you measure success? What action steps need to be taken for them to be considered successful? What are the results you need? What timelines are associated with these issues? |
| The person has asked you to clarify priorities and/or goals and outcomes. | Focus on high-priority responsibilities, goals, and measurable outcomes. |
| The person is exceeding expectations and needs new challenges. | Review new responsibilities and discuss any shift in priorities. |

http://www.civilservice.louisiana.gov/files/divisions/Training/Manuals/Clarify%20Perf%20Expecations%20MANUAL%2008-01-11.pdf.

An important part of organizational expectations should come from what the customers, clients, and stakeholders want the organization to deliver. Of course, the only way to know what these expectations are is to ask. However, this "asking" should be done carefully and systematically so that the feedback clearly demonstrates what their expectations are.

When top management is not clear with people about what the organization needs and what is expected, the stage is set for mismatched expectations. This leads to wasted time and resources because work often has to be redone or important schedules aren't met. Because the list of expectations could be almost infinite, they haven't been listed here. These should be developed by organizational leadership as relevant to the situation, the work flow, and/or the staff.

*Exercise 17: Defining Expectations*

*Take a typical problem or work situation for the organization, such as working with a prospect? Ask each of the following groups to list their specific expectations for that situation:*

- *Members of the Board*
- *Funders or contributing members*
- *Top management*
- *Staff*

*Review these stated expectations, and develop a common set of them that reflects the input from all above sources. Discuss the process for communicating and meeting these expectations successfully.*

**Practices accountability**

Accountability implies risk and reward. A leader earns rewards for success and accepts penalties for failure. When a leader takes responsibility for results and shows a concern for meeting expectations, he or she is held in high esteem by followers. A strong self-leader takes responsibility for his or her own success, and doesn't blame others or point fingers when things

go wrong. Successful accountability revolves around *measurable* results that are of high quality, timely, and cost-effective. In addition, leaders set and exemplify high ethical standards and hold themselves and others accountable for their conduct.

> *Few things can help an individual more than to place responsibility on him and to let him know that you trust him*. Booker T. Washington

The level of accountability to which individuals are held should vary according to their level of leadership in the organization. The higher the level of leadership, the greater should be the responsibility for results. For that reason, it is important that top leadership establishes regular review and oversight procedures against the organization's plan. It should also be clear what should be measured with respect to performance and how those measurements should take place. These measurements are of minimal value, however, if the leadership doesn't provide regular feedback to ensure that performance expectations are met, and recognizes that performance that achieves the goals of the organization.

**Exercises good judgment**

> *With good judgment, little else matters. Without good judgment, nothing else matters.* Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis.

Although good judgment is difficult to measure, it is nevertheless extremely important for an effective leader. Our ability to use good judgment determines the quality of our personal and professional lives. Good judgment consists making of well-informed and wise decisions that lead to proper priorities and desired outcomes. It involves analyzing both the short-term and the long-term consequences of our actions, and then basing our decisions and actions on that understanding.

Decision-making involves the act of choosing among alternatives, whereas judgment is about drawing a conclusion or forming an opinion where a number of possible solutions exist. In other words, judgment is a subset of the process of decision-making.

People often question whether or not judgment can be taught, thinking it is a gift that you either have or have not. Many might say that it must be developed through the "school of hard knocks." Certainly, talent and experience can lead to effective professional judgment, but management research has demonstrated that acquiring key skills can enhance one's competence in making judgments.

> *Experience without good judgment is worthless; good judgment without experience is still good judgment.* August Ray.
>
> *Good judgment comes from experience. Experience comes from bad judgment.* Oscar Wilde.
>
> *Some people have 20 years of experience, and others have had the 1 year of experience 20 times.*

Being competent in making judgments helps resist getting carried away with one quality (such as being able to make quick decisions) or one measure of success (such as landing a good prospect). Good judgment can lead to courses of action that don't just "follow the crowd" or "do what everyone else is doing." It also takes judgment to know when to approach your strengths cautiously and when to pull out all the stops. Certainly, the most effective leaders make a high percentage of successful judgment calls at the times when it counts the most. Put simply, these judgment calls determine the success or failure of their organizations.

Unfortunately, good judgment is often lacking in managers and "so-called" leaders.[137] This is because a strong ego can badly skew leadership judgment. This is particularly disastrous when it involves decisions that affect people adversely. Research provides convincing evidence that even the smartest and most experienced people can fall into predictable judgment traps and biases.[138] One of the most common judgment traps is the tendency to want to immediately solve a problem by making a quick judgment. That usually leads to accepting the first workable alternative that is presented, which is likely to result in a less than desirable outcome.

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[137] *The Economist, June 8, 2013, p. 72.*

[138] KPMG, " Professional Judgment Framework: Understanding and Developing Professional Judgment in Auditing," http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/dl/free/0078025435/928521/Professional_Judgment_Module.pdf.

Another problem that typically occurs with respect to organizational judgment is that top management tends to hire employees that are likely to make the same judgment calls that they would. This is part of the reason that management often hires people like themselves. Obviously, this precludes obtaining diverse and innovative input into the decision-making process leading to a judgment.

All leaders, regardless of the level in the organization in which they function, are engaged in making judgments. The difference between judgment and decision-making is that making a decision usually happens in a moment, when the decision is made. Judgment is a process that unfolds over time that typically involves three critical areas:

- Personnel policies and staffing
- The strategic direction of the organization and its activities
- Crises that need to be resolved, which are usually under the pressure of time.[139]

According to leadership experts Noel Tichy and Warren Bennis, judgment calls about people are the most critical ones that leaders have to make.[140] This is because the members of the organization have a huge impact on everything it does. This includes the Board, who has the responsibility to choose who should be hired to lead the organization. Clearly, once the right people are on the team, it is then possible to set an appropriate strategy and deal with any crises.

Judgments about people are particularly difficult to make because of the complexity of human interrelationships. Personality and emotional issues can significantly alter what might appear to be a sound judgment in hiring or involving people in the organization. A highly skilled individual may have a negative attitude that hinders the effectiveness of the organization.

[139] Noel Tichy and Chris DeRose, "Wanted: CEO with Extraordinary Leadership Judgment," http://www.noeltichy.com/pdfs/TichyDeRoseARTICLEDRAFT.pdf., and "Leadership Judgment: Without It Nothing Else Matters," http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/58085/277_ftp.pdf;jsessionid=860E1F74F5511FF8D2C74BA259679CCD?sequence=1.

[140] Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis, "How Winning Leaders Make Great Calls. http://sitemaker.umich.edu/umhs-talentmanagement/files/judgement.pdf.

And so on. All of the challenges surrounding the use of such "soft skills" as conflict resolution, negotiation, team building, and communication play a key role in judging the organization's members and their ability to contribute to the effectiveness of the organization.

Successful judgments in general depend on how well the leader manages the whole process, not just the single moment when a decision is made.[141] In fact, as was previously stated, hasty judgments often lead to poor results. A leader, therefore, should go through the process of recognizing the need for a judgment, clarifying the issue, pulling the necessary resources together, making sure the sources of information and advice are engaged, and then weigh or rate all the options in order to make a good judgment call. Then the leadership must make that judgment at the right time, and follow through on the implementation to make sure that the outcome turns out as well as possible.

The preparation for making a judgment begins with **humility**, which has a couple of key elements. First, humility calls for recognizing and accepting the reality that we don't know everything. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that we as individuals are more important than the organizations or institutions that we work with. Successful leadership preparation also involves recognizing the need to serve others instead of pushing them to do what you want from them.

This issue of humility and self-awareness is important. One of the key drivers in making decisions and exercising good judgment is an individual's own set of values, which is that set of deeply held beliefs about what is good, right, and appropriate. These values are deep-seated and remain constant over time, guiding us in our daily actions both personally and professionally.[142] Therefore, it is important to be clearly aware of one's values as they impact judgment. An effective and credible leader will be someone who is able to successfully balance his or her individual and organizational interests based on these values. For example, someone who

[141] Noel Tichy and Chris DeRose,"Leadership Judgment: Without It Nothing Else Matters," http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/58085/277_ftp.pdf;jsessionid=860E1F74F5511FF8D2C74BA259679CCD?sequence=1.

[142] OPP's blog, "The Importance of Good Judgment," http://www.opp.com/en/about-opp/blog/2011/october/the-importance-of-good-judgement.

is too focused on his/her own agenda may risk alienating co-workers whose cooperation is necessary to meet organizational objectives.

The next crucial aspect of judgment follows this "attitude adjustment," and involves more **clearly understanding the situation** that requires a decision. That means that a leader has to be clearly aware of the need for change, must then gather the necessary information related to making a good judgment, and then clarify the situation or issue in such a way that it is clear and compelling for the organization's staff and stakeholders.[143] It is important to avoid the old joke, "My mind is made up; don't confuse me with the facts." Effective judgment can be biased if people go according to their natural tendencies and use only that information that supports and agrees with their preference. For that reason alone, it is often helpful to obtain good advice from successful and respected leaders and learn from them, rather than going through a difficult process of trial and error.

As an example of the gathering of information with respect to a personnel issue, it might be important to identify the key roles in your organization, focus on filling them, and listen to the desires, expectations, and needs of the people in those roles. The right people need to be placed in the right spots, it should be ensured that they have the appropriate resources and training, and they need to be listened to and allowed to do their jobs. Clearly, it takes the "right" people within an organization to implement a good strategy and to rise to the occasion during those crises that are likely to occur.

A third critical aspect of judgment is **arriving at a decision and being able to clearly explain it**. This process can be facilitated by the use of "why" questions that clarify what really needs to be addressed in a particular judgment.

Another part of the preparation phase for making a judgment involves **getting the right people engaged**. It is essential to determine who has what to contribute and get them involved at the right time. Those who have nothing to contribute should probably not be part of the process. The

[143] Noel Tichy and Chris DeRose,"Leadership Judgment: Without It Nothing Else Matters," http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/58085/277_ftp.pdf;jsessionid=860E1F74F5511FF8D2C74BA259679CCD?sequence=1.

key is to get on board not only the people who can help make a smart decision and execute it, but also the people who can derail it.

Once that judgment has been made, then it is important to **mobilize the resources**, funding, people, information, and technology to make it happen. So many good decisions and judgments fail to be properly or effectively executed. This is such a waste of leadership and resources.

It is also important to respond correctly to a decision or judgment that proves to be a mistake. This means there should be a willingness to **acknowledge mistakes** made in judgment, such as staff assignments, and rectify them quickly. After a lot of time and thought is put into making an important decision, we understandably hesitate to undo all that work right away. It is often easier to let a bad decision stand than to go through the hassle of redoing it. However, any judgment made that is important to the organization should be subject to modification along the way. This assumes, of course, that the leader making the judgment is open to feedback and committed to follow through with the appropriate input received.

A final, and often overlooked, element of good judgment is **reflection**. Reflection begins when you think about what the judgment you made says about you. This can be facilitated by keeping a journal, and by blocking time off on your calendar every three months or so to sit down and review the key decisions you made over the previous year.[144] Encouraging leaders to reflect also often requires them to be more aware of the emotions of the people they are interacting with, which is very useful feedback if read correctly.

In the end, it is a leader's judgment that determines an organization's success or failure. On a more personal level, it is the sum of a leader's judgment calls that will be the basis that others will use to evaluate his or her career, as well as his or her life accomplishments.[145]

[144] John R. Ryan, "Four Big Ways Leaders Exercise Good Judgment," *Forbes*, http://www.forbes.com/2010/03/31/ceo-judgement-ego-leadership-managing-ccl.html.
[145] Noel M. Tichy and Warren G. Bennis, "Making Judgment Calls," *Harvard Business Review*, October 2007, http://hbr.org/2007/10/making-judgment-calls/ar/1.

## Conclusions

All in all, an effective leader needs to acquire an impressive range of key competencies. The competencies presented in this chapter are considered by the author to be integral to successful leadership, but they certainly don't exhaust the list. Furthermore, no single competency is adequate for an effective leader, and it is important to learn how to use a variety of these competencies flexibly and appropriately.

The situation is likely to dictate to a great extent just what competency is needed. Clearly, some competencies matter more than others, particularly at the higher levels of leadership. For senior-level executives, for example, technical expertise matters far less than the art of influence: you can hire people with great technical skills, but then you should create a climate that fosters motivation, guidance, and inspiration. For that reason, it is very important for a leader to understand what employees need and want, as well as what motivates them. No one can be an effective leader without an understanding of how to interact with his or her "followers."

Clearly, mastering a wide range of competencies will not be quickly accomplished. Therefore, those seeking to be more effective leaders should begin by identifying the one or two competencies they believe are most important to them given their particular circumstances, and then work on those skills that will enable them to become more competent through learning and practice. After a time, more competencies can be added to the leadership "portfolio."

# Chapter 7

# LEARNING LEADERSHIP SKILLS

As the noted expert on leadership John Maxwell observed, *although it's true that some people are born with greater natural gifts than others, the ability to lead is really a collection of skills, nearly all which can be learned and improved.*[146] Successful leaders are learners. Leadership experts Warren Benis and Burt Nanus found that *it is the capacity to develop and improve their skills that distinguishes leaders from their followers.*[147]

As was stated earlier, developing appropriate skills can lead to developing related competencies. However, it is a longer process to become fully competent in some leadership characteristic as opposed to acquiring a set of specific skills. For that reason, most leadership development programs focus primarily on developing skills rather than on competencies. Although these skills are certainly useful, they are not enough in themselves to develop effective leaders. It is certainly possible to be a skilled speaker but a poor conversationalist, for example.

> *Human nature seems to endow people with the ability to size up everybody in the world but themselves.* John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership.*

The leadership potential of employees and mid-management is not likely to be tapped, however, unless the individual is motivated to gain new competencies and skills, which implies a *willingness* to pursue training. Much of learning is about *attitude*. Certainly, individuals vary in their experiences or their ability to learn. However, if someone "won't" pursue learning new competencies and skills, not much can be done with them, and he or she isn't likely to grow as a leader. An effective contemporary leader requires a blend of qualities, competencies, and skills, and mastering this wide range implies systematic and ongoing learning. Clearly, the skill set of an organization is no greater than the skills of its people. Unless each individual in the organization learns, the organization itself cannot learn.

[146] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 25.
[147] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 25.

Although the individual must bear the ultimate responsibility for his or her leadership development, employers also have an obligation and responsibility to recognize leadership potential in their employees, assist in their personal and professional growth, and prepare them for the future.[148] Excellent organizations have learned that developing self-leaders is a powerful way to positively impact its performance.[149] In high performing organizations, people are treated as appreciating assets who grow more valuable with what they gain in experience and knowledge.[150] The excellent organization is one that has become a learning organization that cultivates the development of leaders at all levels. Building leadership capacity throughout the organization will be explored more fully in Chapter 11.

## "Hard" or Occupational vs. "Soft" or Behavioral Skills

Some of the skills that need to be learned can be labeled "hard skills" and some "soft skills." "Hard skills" are often thought of as the occupational skills necessary to complete the functional aspects of a job. For example, a data base manager needs to know how to use appropriate software to build applications; a web site developer needs to know how to create and/or manage a website. All leaders in the organization should probably master such professional hard skills as making presentations, managing projects, and chairing meetings.

Organizational leadership in general also has its own set of occupational skills, such as the ability to synthesize data; the ability to make timely and informed decisions; the capability to define priorities and goals; and the aptitude to see situations from a wide organizational perspective.[151] In many cases, employees haven't had much exposure to activities within the organization other than their own. As a result, part of their leadership development should be an understanding of what other departments or functions do and how that work is connected to their own. In addition,

[148] http://www.ela.wi.gov/docview.asp?docid=15396&locid=99.
[149] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, p. 92.
[150] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, p. 93.
[151] http://www.businessinsider.com/successful-leadership-skills-2012-11.

they need to learn their organization's relationship to its broader environment.

Hard skills are about getting the job done. The tendency is for these skills to be oriented toward technical and managerial specifics. Soft skills make the difference between a job that gets done and a job that gets done exceedingly well. However, soft skills are far harder to teach and pass on. Yet, they are the key to persuading other people to follow you. Clearly, both types of skills are important, and effective leadership requires a committed approach to mastering both.

"Soft skills" can be seen as the behaviors people demonstrate as they go about their occupational tasks. How does the development professional interact with a business prospect? How does one staff member work with another staff member with whom he or she is experiencing conflict? How proficient is the individual in leading a team?

On the behavioral side, leadership requires an exceedingly high degree of skill in working with and for others, holding others accountable to their commitments, and marshaling others to work together toward the achieving of the leader's vision. It cannot be assumed that employees being groomed for new leadership roles will be proficient in building the network of relationships that is so crucial to effective leadership. Furthermore, these relationships should go beyond the organization itself and into the broader domain of activity of the organization in the community or region it serves.

Unfortunately, many leaders fail to embrace a concern for human relationships within the organization instead busy themselves with non-leadership tasks, such as managing the work their staff or volunteers should be doing. This occurs, for example, when the CEO insists on reviewing every response to inquiries, or when Board members micro-manage the development organization's activities.

The more one's role involves leadership, the more the job must focus on blending the occupational and the behavioral, the technical and the

interpersonal, the hard and the soft. If you cannot achieve this internal balance, your organization will suffer an imbalance. This balance can be very difficult, because many people define themselves by their ability to be experts in their occupational skills while viewing behavioral skills as secondary or incidental. In the field of economic development, much more attention is usually paid to occupational skills such as marketing, working with existing business, social networking, etc. Because of this, especially with respect to leaders, traditional "soft" skills are harder to get right.[152]

Changing leadership behavior is more difficult than acquiring technical skills. A leader doesn't have the convenience of behaving only for himself/herself. He or she must also be a good role model for others. Many leaders fail, or fail to develop, because they are stuck in an old mindset and continue to act primarily for the benefit of themselves.

## Interpersonal Skills

It isn't easy to become or remain a leader. Relating to people is challenging. One must first come to a full realization that human relationship skills are important. A growing awareness and understanding seems to be developing among leaders that the only way to significantly improve organizational effectiveness is to develop better interpersonal skills.

Unfortunately, many leaders resist improving their interpersonal skills because it appears that they fear that admitting the need to do so shows weakness to superiors, peers, and subordinates. This is hardly a helpful path for developing better leaders, as it denies the basic truth that if you expect to lead others, you must first be able to lead yourself.

The capacity for improved human relationships has also been called "social intelligence." Research has clearly demonstrated that many Fortune 500 companies name strong interpersonal, communication, and team skills as the most important criteria for success in organizational leadership.[153] A

[152] http://www.businessinsider.com/successful-leadership-skills-2012-11.
[153] http://business.uni.edu/buscomm/Interpersonal/InterpersonalCommunication.htm.

leader can be a brilliant innovator, a good problem-solver, or a strategic thinker, but if he/she can't inspire, build relationships, or communicate effectively, these talents won't take that leader and his/her organization very far. As has been stated so often in this book, leadership is about touching something in people that stirs the kind of positive action that changes outcomes and transforms the organization. If you don't care for people, enjoy interacting with them, welcome the challenge of interaction, and have a need to improve their situation, you will have difficulty being effective in a leadership role.[154]

> *When we liberate the leader in everyone, extraordinary things happen.* James Kouzes and Barry Posner.

Improving human relationships doesn't happen by chance. It takes some amount of goal-setting and planning to pursue the improvement of interrelationship skills. The more planning and support within the organization that goes into leadership development, the more likely those so engaged will improve and create a positive impact in the organization. Everyone in the organization can start improving their interpersonal skills today by evaluating where they stand in the skill areas that are covered in the following sections, and then making specific plans on how to improve those areas. Books have been written about how to acquire each of these particular skills, so the following discussion of each skill will be relatively brief and focus on key points to be aware of.

**Communicate Effectively**

> *Effective communication may be the most basic requirement of the 21st Century leader*. Dr. William Robinson, President of Whitworth College in Spokane.

Many people, including management, fall short in their ability to work effectively with others because they lack the ability to communicate well. The successful leader of an organization will be more competent in exercising a range of interpersonal skills whenever he or she uses effective

[154] Michael T. Baker, *People: the Real Business of Leadership*, BookLocker.com, 2010.

communication to develop or maintain relationships, to share knowledge and professional experience, and/or to let others know what he/she is feeling or what he/she values.

As one digs into specific communication skills and better understands them, it may seem overwhelming to master all or many of them. However, being able to appropriately draw upon a particular skill when the situation calls for it is critical for achieving effective communication. It takes considerable practice of these skills to have them become second nature. Also, as was demonstrated in Chapter 5, one must have a positive attitude about the communication taking place, or a particular becomes meaningless.

It is important to remember that people often judge us by what we actually communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, and not by what we intended to communicate. Leaders can overcome the challenge of communicating with others, in part, by gaining a better understanding of how his/her personality and mindset is affecting communication, and by trying to better understand the personalities and mindsets of those being communicated with. This can be facilitated within the organization by the following preparation:

a. Start by thinking about the backgrounds and needs of those people you are engaged with, and about where they stand on the issue you will be discussing. It is important to try to figure out how the other person or persons will perceive the significance of what is being said in light of their circumstances. This certainly may alter how or what one does or says.
b. Ask others for ideas about how to better understand the situation that the communication is about. If one is open-minded about what is heard, problems that might otherwise escalate may be seen in a better perspective.
c. Ask yourself why you are saying something in particular, and if it were to become public, would you be comfortable with your communication.

Clearly, as was discussed in Chapter 5 on leadership behavior, the core of

effective communication is caring about those with whom one is communicating or trying to do so. Much can be forgiven about style or finesse if concern for one another is demonstrated. However, there are some key techniques that can be used to improve communication. Probably, the most important of these is the ability to listen.

## Effective Listening

> *We have been given two ears and but a single mouth, in order that we may hear more and talk less.* Zeno of Citrium.
>
> *Listening is not a skill; it's a discipline. Anybody can do it.* Peter Drucker.

*Listening effectively* is a particularly important communication skill that can be learned. It helps build relationships, solve problems, ensure understanding, resolve conflicts, and improve accuracy. At work, effective listening means fewer errors and less wasted time. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be part of human nature to listen to others with an attitude of caring and understanding. As you work with others to be more collaborative, the key to success is the ability not only to speak clearly but also to listen with understanding. Good listening means understanding the speaker's total message. Unfortunately, our culture in the U.S. apparently tends to value effective speaking more than it values good listening.

Clearly, we can never be absolutely certain that we have completely or accurately understood another person. Therefore, it is essential to test the accuracy of our listening and minimize the misunderstanding and distortion that occurs in most interpersonal communication. Sadly, we are usually poor judges of our own listening skills.

> *Heaven is a place where the wicked cease from troubling you with talk of their personal affairs, and the good listen with attention while you expound your own.* Ambrose Bierce in his *The Devil's Dictionary.*
>
> *A bore is a person who talks when you wish him to listen.*

Tests of listening comprehension show that without training the average person listens with about 25 percent efficiency. The average rate of speaking is around 125 words per minute. Evidence exists that if thought were measured in words per minute, a person could easily think at about four times the typical rate of speaking. Thus, while you are listening, you have about 75 percent of your time free. You can use this extra time not only to improve your understanding of what is being said, but to think up answers, make decisions, and plan future actions. At times, you might deliberately ask questions to stall for time to think, and that silence is often interpreted by the other person as demonstrating that you are a "thinking" person.

Certain techniques can be acquired that facilitate improved listening and that can improve this statistic in just about any individual. However, it should be understood that not all listening is equally effective in good communication. Four basic types of listening exist: [155]

- ✓ **Inactive Listening.** This is the kind of listening you want to avoid. It is inefficient and unproductive. It is when you only hear the words, and they go in one ear and out the other.
- ✓ **Selective Listening.** This kind of listening is probably the most common. It is when you hear only what you want to hear. You filter the message. Like Inactive Listening, it is also inefficient and unproductive.
- ✓ **Active Listening.** This is when you make a conscious effort to not only hear the words but also listen for the complete message the speaker is sending. It takes into consideration the intent and the nonverbal communication of the speaker. Active Listening also uses empathy and is nonjudgmental.
- ✓ **Reflective Listening.** Like Active Listening, Reflective Listening listens to the whole message. However, it also attempts to provide feedback to the speaker. This is particularly important if you are dealing with a complicated issue or resolving a conflict. Reflective Listening is used to clarify what is being said and convey mutual understanding.

[155] Dugger, Jim, *Listen Up: Hear What's Really Being Said,* Shawnee Mission, KS: National Press Publications, 1991, p. 4.

Three basic levels of reflective listening exist that can impact its effectiveness in the communication interaction. In general, the depth of this type of listening should match the situation. Examples of the three levels include:

1. *Repeating or rephrasing* – the listener repeats what was said or substitutes synonyms or similar phrases, staying close to the speaker's statement. However, this does not mean simply parroting back to the person what they have just said.

2. *Paraphrasing* – the listener makes a major restatement of what he/she understood the speaker to say. When done carefully and accurately, paraphrasing both avoids the tendency to evaluate and helps the receiver understand the sender's point of view. When the listener has misunderstood and paraphrased a faulty understanding of the sender's ideas and feelings, the sender can then respond in a way that will clarify the incorrect response. This should lead to an improved understanding between them.

3. *Reflection of feeling* – the listener emphasizes emotional aspects of communication through statements involving feeling. This is probably the deepest form of listening. It is most applicable when someone talks to you in an emotional way, such as when they are unhappy, angry, happy, sad, etc. Generally, when people display these emotions, a subconscious desire exists for those emotions to be recognized and acknowledged by others. By reflecting those feelings back to them, you are acknowledging them and demonstrating that you care how they feel. Examples include: "You seem to be in a good mood today" or "it seems that really upset you."

When you listen reflectively, you express your:

- Desire to understand how the person is thinking and feeling.
- Belief that the person is worth listening to.
- Respect and/or willingness to accept other people's feelings.

- Willingness not to judge the person.
- Desire to explore a problem and help the other party understand the dimensions of the problem, possible choices, and their consequences.

A reflective response lets you communicate to a person what you *perceive* they are doing, feeling, and saying. It is clearly impossible to be the other person and your best understanding is only a reasonable approximation. However, despite its limitations, this approach helps you be open-minded and not be quick to judge.

Varying the levels of reflection can be effective in listening. Also, at times there are benefits to over-stating or under-stating a reflection. However, an overstatement (i.e. an amplified reflection) may cause a person to back away from the discussion while an understatement may lead to a continuing and deepening of the intensity of the speaker's feeling.

Reflective listening, as effective as it is, is not intended to be used at all times and in every situation, which is neither practical nor helpful. Too frequent use of it can irritate those with whom you are talking. Those times when it is beneficial include:

- When the other person has a problem and needs a sounding board to sort through it.
- When you need clarity before acting on a request.
- When you are in a meeting and feel you must disagree or challenge what someone has said.
- When you are in a meeting and want to verify that you understand what someone has stated.
- When you are in a direct conversation regarding a matter of mutual importance.

One way to improve your listening is to take notes on what the other person is saying. This obviously is not recommended for a casual conversation, but can be effective in meetings, speeches, presentations, etc. However, when you concentrate on taking notes, you tend to hear only half of what is being said. You should write down just enough to let you recall

the key ideas.

In summary, effective listening skills can be acquired by doing the following simple steps:[156]

**Step 1: Face the speaker and maintain eye contact.**

Talking to someone while they scan the room, study a computer screen, or gaze out the window is like trying to have a conversation with your cat. How much of the person's divided attention are you actually getting? If the person were your child you might demand, "Look at me when I'm talking to you." Teachers of autistic children often make the children look at them while engaging them. However, that's not the sort of thing we say to a friend or colleague.

In most Western cultures, eye contact is considered important to effective communication. When we talk, we tend to look each other in the eye. Of course, that can't happen if you aren't facing one another. However, keep in mind that in some cultures it is very impolite and even an insult to look someone in the eye. Where eye contact is appropriate, if the other party isn't looking at you but continues to talk, you should still stay focused on their eyes.

**Step 2: Be attentive, but relaxed.**

Once eye contact has been made, it is time to relax. It is counter-productive to stare fixedly at the other person. You can look away now and then and carry on like a normal person. The important thing is to be attentive.

To aid in being attentive, it is helpful to mentally screen out distractions, like background activity and noise. In addition, try not to focus on the speaker's accent or speech mannerisms to the point where they become distractions. Finally, don't be distracted by your own thoughts, feelings, or biases. Come to the conversation fully prepared to listen.

**Step 3: Keep an open mind.**

Listen without judging the other person or mentally criticizing the things he/she tells you. If what is being said makes you uncomfortable, it is

[156] Dianne Schilling, "Ten Steps to Effective Listening." http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening/.

alright to be uncomfortable. However, don't allow that discomfort to get you into negative thinking about the other person. That compromises your effectiveness as a listener.

One should also listen without jumping to conclusions and anticipating what a person is trying to say. Remember that the speaker is using language to represent the thoughts and feelings inside his/her mind. You don't know what those thoughts and feelings are, and the only way you'll find out is by listening.

**Step 4: Listen to the words and try to picture what the speaker is saying.**

Allow your mind to create a mental model or picture of the information being communicated. When listening for long stretches at a time, focus on key words and phrases. This will reduce possible boredom and help keep your mind from wandering.

When it's your turn to listen, don't spend the time planning what to say next. You can't rehearse and listen at the same time. Think only about what the other person is saying. Look for points of agreement that can facilitate a mutual understanding.

**Step 5: Don't interrupt**

Don't be a sentence-grabber. Occasionally we might find ourselves interrupting and finishing the other person's sentences. This often distracts you from what the other person is trying to communicate, because you are injecting your own train of thought and not learning where the other person's thoughts are headed. Unfortunately, as we watch talk shows and reality programs we see many examples of aggressive interruptions being condoned rather than polite dialogue.

Interrupting sends a variety of messages. It says:

- "I'm more important than you are."
- "What I have to say is more interesting, accurate, or relevant."
- "I don't really care what you think."
- "I don't have time for your opinion."
- "This isn't a conversation, it's a contest, and I'm going to win."

We all think and speak at different rates. If you are a quick thinker and an agile talker, the burden is on *you* to relax your pace for the slower, more thoughtful communicator or for the person who has trouble expressing himself/herself.

**Step 6: Don't impose your "solutions."**

When listening to someone talk about a problem, refrain from suggesting solutions. Most of us don't want someone else's advice anyway. If we do, we'll ask for it. Most of us prefer to figure out our own solutions. We want to be listened to, which often helps us to figure things out for ourselves.

**Step 7: Wait for the speaker to pause to ask clarifying questions.**

When you don't understand something, of course you should ask the speaker to explain it to you. But rather than interrupt, wait until the speaker pauses. Then say something like, "Could you help me better understand what you just said about…"

**Step 8: Ask questions and make comments only to ensure understanding.**

How often have you been in a conversation when you mention a trip you just took and the other person jumps in to go into detail about having been there as well and what they did. Or you are discussing a new work process and the other party starts asking questions about things that have little or nothing to do with what is being discussed. Unfortunately, this happens all the time. These diversions lead people in directions that have nothing to do with where *they* thought they were going. Sometimes we work our way back to the original topic, but very often we don't.

An effective listener would notice that a statement or question has led the speaker astray, and would take responsibility for getting the conversation back on track.

**Step 9: Try to feel what the speaker is feeling.**

The concept of empathy will be discussed shortly, but it should be noted that it is important to try to understand and reflect another person's feelings if you really intend to understand their communication. *Empathy*

*is the heart and soul of good listening.*[157] To experience empathy, you have to put yourself in the other person's place and allow yourself to feel what it is like to *be* that individual at that moment.

**Step 10: Give the speaker regular feedback.**

The speaker is more likely to believe that he or she is being understood when appropriate and frequent feedback is received. This can be as simple as repeating what someone has just said. This can be overdone, but it does demonstrate that you are listening. It also provides an opportunity to think about your response to that comment before you blurt out some response that may be inappropriate.

If the speaker's feelings are hidden or unclear, it can be helpful to occasionally paraphrase the content of the message. This puts meaning into what you are saying and shows that you are thinking about what the other person has said.

Even the use of appropriate facial expressions or a simple nod or exclamation can demonstrate attentiveness and understanding. The idea is to give the speaker some proof that you are listening, and that you are following his/her train of thought.

In situations where a specific task needs to be done, regardless of whether at work or home, it is extremely effective to restate instructions and messages to be sure you understand correctly.

In summary, we should be as thoughtful about preparing to listen as we are about preparing a speech. Good listening requires preparation, concentration, and reflection. Much more can be said about listening skills, and this discussion isn't dealing with the communication skills associated with writing, speaking, and presenting. The concern here is to emphasize the importance of good interpersonal communication, which is a key skill that any leader needs to have.

[157] Dianne Schilling, "Ten Steps to Effective Listening." http://www.forbes.com/sites/womensmedia/2012/11/09/10-steps-to-effective-listening/.

## *Exercise 18: Effective Listening Exercise*

**Listening Inventory**

| **Question** | Never<br><br>1 | 2 | Sometimes<br><br>3 | 4 | Almost<br>Always<br>5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I find myself understanding what was said but not what was meant. | | | | | |
| 2. I find it hard to concentrate on what the speaker is saying because of external distractions such as noise or movement | | | | | |
| 3. I find it hard to concentrate on what the speaker is saying because of internal distractions such as worry, fear, being unprepared, or daydreaming | | | | | |
| 4. I find myself responding to what the speaker implies rather than what he says. | | | | | |
| 5. I find myself responding in anger at words, stated or implied, that for all logical reasons should not make me angry. | | | | | |
| 6. I have trouble reading someone else's body language. | | | | | |
| 7. I find it difficult to respond to a speaker nonjudgmentally if I don't agree with him. | | | | | |
| 8. I find it difficult to respond to a speaker nonjudgmentally if I don't like him. | | | | | |
| 9. I find myself preparing my response before the speaker has finished | | | | | |
| 10. I find myself listening selectively, hearing only those words and ideas that I want to hear. | | | | | |
| 11. Certain words, phrases, or actions consistently trigger certain positive or negative responses. | | | | | |
| 12.I find myself saying, "What did you say?" even though I've heard the speaker. | | | | | |
| 13. I rely on others to interpret what happened at a meeting | | | | | |

My total score_____

Now check your totals against the Listening Inventory Scale below:

13-20 – You are a very good listener.

21-32 – You are a fairly good listener.

33-45 – You are an average listener.

46-58 – You are a fairly poor listener.

59-65 – You are a poor listener.

(the preceding quiz is modified from Dugger, *Listen Up*, pp.5-7)

## *Exercise 19: Irritating Listening Habits Assessment*

INSTRUCTIONS: Place an "I" before any of the following habits of which you are guilty – even if rarely – when communicating with others. (BE HONEST! Only you will see your responses.) Then determine how you may avoid using these irritating listening habits in the future.

_____1. Sometimes don't give others a chance to talk. I go in knowing what I want to say and sometimes don't allow other's concerns to be discussed.

_____2. Sometimes interrupt when others are talking.

_____3. Avoid looking at others when they talk.

_____4. Have been known to doodle or draw pictures while others talk.

_____5. At times, play with a pencil, pen, paperclip, or other object that may be in my hand while others talk.

_____6. Pace the room if I get impatient with others.

_____7. Use a "poker face" sometimes in my conversations with others.

_____8. Have been known to ignore others while taking several incoming calls.

_____9. Seldom smile while working with a customer or colleague.

_____10. Feel uncomfortable and change the subject if someone asks me a question about something I don't know the answer to.

_____11. Have been known to prefinish others' sentences while they are talking.

_____12. Frequently answer a question with another question.

_____13. Have been caught asking a question about some topic I was discussing with someone – only to show him/her that I wasn't really listening.

_____14. Take prolific notes when others talk.

_____15. Have been known to interrupt others and say, "that reminds me of . . . ."

_____16. Sometimes check my watch if I am talking with someone and know that I have to be somewhere else in the next 20 to 30 minutes.

_____17. Often am rushed and forget to give important information.

_____18. Sometimes pretend to listen to others' points of view when I have already made up my mind about an issue.

_____19. Find myself making others uncomfortable when I use a lot of eye contact.

_____20. Rarely let those I work with know what I am thinking about. That's just the way that I am.

*Exercise 20: Practicing Effective Listening*

*For at least one week, at the end of every conversation in which significant information is exchanged, conclude with a summary statement. In conversations that result in agreements about future obligations or activities, summarizing will not only ensure accurate follow-through, it will feel perfectly natural. In conversations that do not include agreements, if summarizing feels awkward just explain that you are doing it as an exercise.*

## Nonverbal Communication

Interpersonal communication certainly involves the *explicit* meaning of words, which is the information or message being conveyed. However, it also refers to *implicit* messages, whether intentional or not, which are expressed through non-verbal behaviors. If you exclude email, texting, and tweeting, the majority of direct communication we experience is probably nonverbal. Communication experts estimate that only 10 percent of our communication involves the words we speak. Another 30 percent is represented by *how* we speak, and 60 percent by our *body language*.

In other words, we obtain a great deal of information about each other without saying a word. Even over the telephone, you can learn almost as much about a person from the tone and cadence of his/her voice than from anything being said. A smiling or frowning face often says much more than the words being spoken.

Face-to-face with a person, it is possible to detect enthusiasm, boredom, or irritation very quickly in the expression around the eyes, the set of the mouth, or the position of the arms. These clues should be paid attention to. When listening, remember that words convey only a fraction of the message. For example, if you realize you are not listening attentively, physically move forward in your seat, or, if standing, toward the speaker if

possible.

Nonverbal cues by themselves are easy to misread. However, they can become particularly meaningful if they are part of a cluster and indicate the thinking of the speaker or the response of the listener. Cues as part of a pattern can furnish feedback concerning how you are progressing toward getting your message across. For example, the speaker may be frowning because he has a headache, while you may think he is displeased with something you said. Nonverbal messages must be interpreted in a total context.

When verbal and nonverbal messages contradict, people tend to believe the nonverbal ones. If you want to send messages effectively, be sure your verbal and nonverbal behaviors are consistent. A person who says, "Oh no, I'm not upset," but cannot sit still and whose fingers tap nervously on the table sends contradictory messages.

Clearly, nonverbal cues can improve or obstruct the listening process. An open cue shows a receptive listener, and a closed cue shows a poor listener. Figure 9 showcases the difference between them under differing circumstances.

**Figure 9: Open vs. Closed Cues**

| NONVERBAL CLUE | OPEN CUE | CLOSED CUE |
|---|---|---|
| Tone of Voice | Soft tone or a soft sigh | Hard tone or a hard sigh |
| Facial Expressions | Face unobstructed with eyes observing the other's face;<br><br>Smiles, smacks lips, or licks open mouth;<br><br>Appears interested | Hands mask face, chin, and mouth with eyes on ceiling or floor;<br><br>Poker face, frowns, tight lips, clenches teeth, rubs nose;<br><br>Appears disinterested |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Eye Contact | Looks into the other's eyes directly | Avoids looking into the other's eyes;<br>Shifts looks, usually with hand on face ready to hide eyes |
| Touching | Touches other person softly | Avoids touching other person;<br>Scratches or pats self |
| Gestures | Palms are out and open;<br>Appears open and welcoming;<br>Hands are clasped behind the head | Clenches or clasps hands;<br>Appears closed, as if guarding self and keeping others away;<br>One hand holds wrist down over "private parts" |
| Spatial Distance | Close | Distant |
| Stance | Legs are slightly apart, arms at sides | One foot is slightly forward, raises or crosses arms |

## Exercise 21: POSTURE AND MOVEMENT CHECKLIST

*One's posture and movement can certainly have a negative impact on the ability to communicate. Go through the following checklist to determine if you have any posture or movement issues that can negatively impact your communication.*

| Yes | No | Posture or movement |
|---|---|---|
| | | Do you lean back on one hip when you are talking in a small group? |
| | | Do you cross your legs when you are standing and chatting informally? |
| | | Is your upper body posture erect? Are your shoulders in a straight line or do they curve inwards towards your chest? |
| | | When you speak formally, do you prefer to be behind a lectern or table? |
| | | Do you communicate impatience by tapping your foot when you are listening? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Do you take the "fig leaf" posture when addressing a group? |
| | | Do you move around or pace back and forth when talking informally? |
| | | Do you rock from side to side or back and forth when talking? |
| | | Do you use a "quick" smile with people? |
| | | Do you talk to others with your arms crossed? |

## Empathy

The concept of empathy was discussed with respect to effective listening. An effective communicator is someone who has real *empathy* for those being communicated with. Carl Rogers defines empathy as seeing *the expressed idea from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him*.[158] An empathic listener tries to hear the messages as the source of the message is hearing them. The difference between an empathic listener and others is the attempt to understand how the other person thinks and feels as the communication is occurring.

If one is listening with empathy, you should be processing what the other person is saying, how they are saying it, and what their body language is really telling you. Again, you are listening so that you can understand what is being communicated, and people communicate so that they can be understood.

Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Sympathy usually means to "feel sorry for." Empathy means to "feel with" another. You can empathize with both positive and negative feelings. Sympathy is usually extended only to persons with problems. To empathize with another is to experience his or her world. When you sense another's feelings and attitudes as if you had experienced those feelings and attitudes, you are empathizing. Empathy is the ability to see as another sees, hear as another hears, and feel as another feels. But empathy always retains the "as I understand your

[158] Carl Rogers, "Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation," in *Communication Concepts and Processes,* ed. Joseph DeVito (Englewood Cliffs NJ:Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 182-188.

situation" quality, for in reality, no one can really get "inside the head" of another. Empathy, then, is the capacity to put oneself in the shoes of others and understand their "personal world of meaning" -- how they view their reality and how they feel about things. Empathy demonstrates a concern for one another's wellbeing. A person who feels empathetically understood by someone is very generally receptive to a relationship with that individual.

Understanding the other side's thinking is not simply a useful bit of information that will help you solve a conflict. Usually, their thinking is the problem. Whether you are making a deal or settling a dispute, differences are defined by the difference between your thinking and theirs. Ultimately, it is "reality" as each side sees it that is the primary problem in resolving a conflict or carrying out a negotiation. Sensitivity to the needs of others, and the ability to listen and to recognize the value of other members' contribution to the organization's products and services, are essential elements in the building a "team."

This perceptual problem also opens the way to a solution. When we are seeking to influence some decision by the other side, it helps to begin by asking ourselves what decisions we would like the other side to make (and then consider what we might do to make that decision more likely).[159]

As a listener, empathizing involves being able to understand what the speaker is *feeling* because you have felt the same emotion before. This also is to show that you care about the emotion of the conversation. Such phrases as "you seem to be really frustrated" or "I sense disappointment," indicate an attempt to be more empathetic. All of this is not an easy thing to do. It takes energy and concentration. But it is a very helpful in facilitating communication.

Emotions and emotional sensitivity are also important to our effectiveness in problem-solving. We would like our actions to be well reasoned and make sense, but no successful relationship is free of emotions. In fact, without appropriate emotions -- including some caring by each side for the

[159] Roger Fisher and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1981, p. 22.

welfare of the other -- it may be impossible for people to resolve important conflicts. However, when strong emotions overwhelm reason, the ability to deal with differences between two or more parties will be significantly impaired.

If we know that emotions play a large role in the outcome of a negotiation or dispute, it only makes sense to think as much about ways to influence the emotional state in a communication as we would think about other communication strategies. This is especially true since the feelings we have toward the other person are likely to influence not only any current problems, but future problems as sell.

It may be true that you can fully empathize only based on things you have actually experienced. If you have never loved, it would be difficult to empathize with someone who is in love and even more difficult to empathize with someone who has lost a loved one. To communicate empathically, however, you don't really need complete empathy. Caring about or wanting to share a person's feelings is often enough.

Empathic listening is not easy. The truth is that most of us don't really want to see things from a point of view other than our own. If we let ourselves see things as others do, we run the risk of being changed. Our own attitudes and values might be threatened. Empathy and the willingness to change one's perspective, however, is a key characteristic of an effective leader.

Empathic listening is even more difficult because it is usually needed when emotions are involved. The very emotion of the situation interferes with the effort to see things as someone else does. But if we impose our own values and perceptions – in other words, evaluate instead of understand – we'll find it nearly impossible to empathize with people whose values differ from ours.

In spite of the difficulties associated with emphatic listening, we usually benefit from doing so. Interpersonal relationships seldom move beyond mere acquaintance unless people work at understanding each other's feelings as well as ideas. Empathic listening is the best way to assess

motivations and to possibly discover hidden purposes others may have. If we need to critique or evaluate what is being said by another, we can do it best when we thoroughly understand the entire message. That means we use empathic listening to understand the feelings as well as the ideas of the source. Clearly, one cannot be an effective leader if one does not listen with empathy.

The following is an interesting example of related terms:

> *A man walking down the street notices the cover off a manhole and hears a voice from within crying "Help, Help!" The man continues walking without any further notice…..*
>
> ***That's APATHY.***
>
> *Another man approaches the hole and also hears the crying "Help, Help!" from below. This man gets down on his hand and knees and begins sobbing, "Oh, my gosh, it's terrible that you are stuck in this hole. Oh, my! I feel so sorry for you…..*
>
> ***That's SYMPATHY.***
>
> *A third man strolls by and hears the pleas for help and exclaims, "Oh my, we do have a problem here! You must be terrified. I'll bet you are very anxious to get out of that hole. Let's see what we can do about it."…..*
>
> ***That's EMPATHY.***
>
> *A fourth fellow walks by the hole, hears the plea for help, sees the man in the hole and jumps in with him…..*
>
> ***That's LUNACY.***[160]

[160] http://www.19thcircuitcourt.state.il.us/bkshelf/cust_serv/19thJudicialCustomerService_120106.pdf.

## Conflict Resolution Skills

> *Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression, and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.* Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Reality of Conflict

It is extremely difficult for someone to be an effective leader without the ability to deal productively with conflict. Since all human interaction is fundamentally based on conflict, leaders need to accept this reality and learn how to work with it.[161] This begins with the recognition that diversity and difference are essential characteristics common to all human experience.[162] Being a leader means moving through the human interaction "mine field" without detonating any major explosions. The role of good leadership is not to put an end to all conflict. That will never happen. Instead, the effective leader must be able to recognize and use those competencies and skills that move organizational interaction through conflicts and toward positive and valuable outcomes for all involved.[163]

Clearly, it is part of human nature to allow differences between people to easily lead to disagreements. When differences are minor, disagreements are easily resolved. However, significant differences can occur as individuals find that they seem to have incompatible goals, and this can lead to significant conflict.

Research has demonstrated that supervisors spend more than 25 percent of their time on conflict management, and managers spend more than 18 percent of their time on relational employee conflicts.[164] Leaders in an organization clearly have to know how to handle difficult people and resolve conflicts. Serious conflict has the power to disrupt relationships and create divisiveness, low morale, and organizational chaos.

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[161] C. Tessier, et.al., NetLibrary Inc. *Conflicting Agents Conflict Management in Multi-agent Systems*. New York: Kluwer Academic, 2002.
[162] M. LeBaron. *Bridging Cultural Conflicts: A New Approach for a Changing World*, 1st ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
[163] Tim Porter O'Grady, "Embracing Conflict: Building a Healthy Community," http://www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/nurs/379/960/M9%20motivation%20perf%20app%2009/porter%20o grady%20embracing%20conflict.pdf.
[164] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_management.

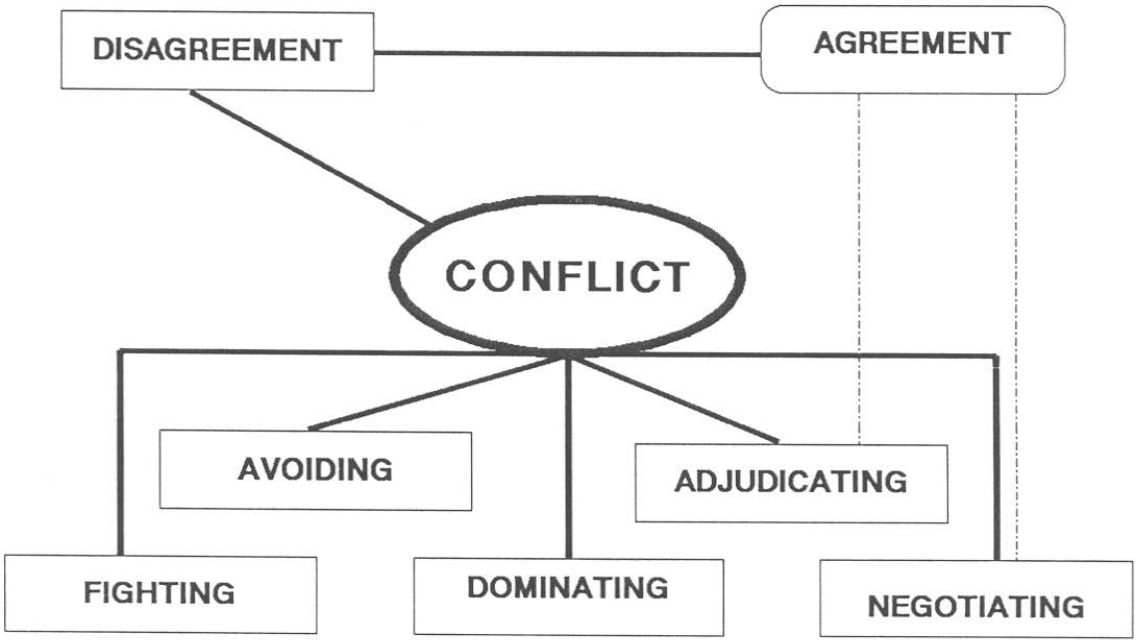
Understanding and identifying the sources of conflict as well as positive and negative aspects of conflict is the first step to good leadership.[165] To that end, it is important to identify the causes of a conflict and explore its effects. Conflict, when properly managed, is a positive source of competitiveness and collaboration in a workplace. Executives and managers must learn to identify constructive conflict and manage it effectively. Conversely, leadership must identify negative conflict and deal with it decisively and completely. In other words, effective leaders must differentiate between conflict that will boost productivity and build stronger teams, and conflict that will decrease output and hinder teamwork. Clearly, the challenge of good leadership is to resolve conflict and channel it into positive competition and collaboration.[166]

Fostering effective conflict resolution is a skill with a number of dimensions that leaders can and need to learn. To begin with, disagreements may often be solved by simple clarification and understanding the other party's point of view. However, the resolution of adversarial conflict generally requires a more proactive effort to bring the individuals or parties to a place of agreement.

Figure 10 demonstrates how people typically deal with conflict:

[165] Melissa McDowell, et.al., "Managing Models for Resolving Conflict in the Workplace." http://www.westbrookstevens.com/conflict_Resolution.htm.
[166] Melissa McDowell, et.al., "Managing Models for Resolving Conflict in the Workplace." http://www.westbrookstevens.com/conflict_Resolution.htm.

**Figure 10: Conflict Resolution**




As demonstrated in this graph, reaction to conflict can vary significantly. One way that people often deal with conflict is to have a *confrontation or fight*. In the process of fighting, both parties are likely to get angry with each other. Even if one wins, the other will suffer a resentful loss. This is never a satisfactory way to solve problems.

Many people attempt to resolve conflicts through *avoidance*. If things get too uncomfortable, they let the other party have its way. Certainly, the party that uses avoidance never feels as if he or she is a winner.

Then there are those who have a *dominating* personality. They don't tolerate someone disagreeing with them. The other party gets a clear message that they better not get involved in a confrontation with this "more powerful" person. This type of power person wants to win at almost any cost.

Another way to handle conflict is through *litigation*, which is unfortunately becoming increasingly popular. If a problem occurs, hire a lawyer and take

it to court. Americans in particular seem to have a strong preference for litigation. For example, we had approximately one lawyer for every 265 residents in the U.S. in 2013, compared to one for every 8,200 residents in Japan. But litigation frequently results in an unhappy settlement for one or maybe both of the parties.

Probably the most effective and sustainable means for resolving conflict is through *negotiation*, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

> *Peace is not the absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.* Ronald Reagan.

Given that conflict is unavoidable, either with personal relationships or within or between organizations, leaders need to have an effective skill for dealing with it in a way that improves a personal or work situation. The desired outcome is a satisfactory resolution or minimization of the conflict or disagreement. Additionally, it is the role of leadership to facilitate the acquisition of conflict resolution skills among all the members of the organization. A commitment to positive conflict resolution should be at the core of the organization's culture.

As was previously stated, conflict does not have to be a negative experience. Certain kinds or levels of conflict are healthy. If no conflict existed, ideas would not be examined thoroughly, different points of view would not be considered, and the decisions that emerged probably would not be as innovative. Groups may reach consensus quickly in the absence of conflict, but in doing so may fail to consider all the alternatives and thereby miss some beneficial solutions. A leader can't be innovative without understanding the role of conflict in coming up with new ideas.

## Self-Awareness

Clearly, conflict resolution is an important competency of good leadership. However, this competency, like so many other leadership competencies, can only be acquired by mastering a set of relevant skills and approaching a conflict with a positive attitude and a respect for the other party.

*Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.* William James.

Much of the success in conflict management begins with "you" before starting to think about the party with whom there is conflict. The leader's individual and personal disposition toward conflict is one of the most critical influences related to getting at conflicts early and effectively within the organization.[167] Therefore, self-awareness is a critical component of successful resolution of interrelationship problems. The more we are aware of our own biases and "hot buttons," the more likely we can prepare ourselves mentally, emotionally, and physically to respond in a preferred way. Furthermore, when a conflict triggers strong feelings, a deep personal need is often at the core of the problem. These needs can be a need to feel safe and secure, a need to feel respected and valued, or a need for greater closeness and intimacy.

A few questions we can ask ourselves to reduce our own issues related to a particular conflict include:

- What are some behaviors by other people that tend to be difficult for me to handle during conflict?
- How do I tend to respond when confronting such behaviors?
- How would I prefer to respond?
- What are some things that I can do for myself that help me develop a more positive approach to dealing with others?
- Are there people in my work (or personal) environment that can help me stay "on track" in when confronted with conflict?[168]

It is important for good leaders to be aware of their responses to conflict situations. Because leaders to a great extent create the environment for organizational behavior and effective interaction, they must recognize that when conflict occurs it is their own behavior that sets the tone for how the organization as a whole approaches conflict situations. Therefore, anything

[167] Tim Porter O'Grady, "Embracing Conflict: Building a Healthy Community," http://www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/nurs/379/960/M9%20motivation%20perf%20app%2009/porter%20ogrady%20embracing%20conflict.pdf.
[168] http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/step1.htm.

that the organization's leadership does to deal with its conflict should include the assessment of its emotional comfort with conflict situations. If leaders are to effectively guide others in the development of appropriate responses to conflict situations, each leader must reflect a level of comfort when dealing with normal levels of conflict.[169]

*Emotional awareness* is a key to reducing stress by understanding yourself and others. If you are out of touch with your feelings or so stressed that you can only pay attention to a limited number of emotions, you won't be able to understand your own needs. And, if you don't understand your own needs, you will have a hard time communicating with others and staying in touch with what's really troubling you. For example, employees often argue about petty differences—e.g., the way a report should be formatted, how customers are responded to, etc.—rather than what is really bothering them.

Clearly, if you don't know how you feel or why you feel that way, you won't be able to communicate effectively or resolve disagreements. Although knowing your own feelings may sound simple, many people ignore or try to minimize strong emotions like anger, sadness, and fear. Your ability to handle conflict, however, depends on being connected to these feelings. If you're afraid of strong emotions or if you insist on finding solutions that are strictly rational, your ability to face and resolve differences will be impaired. As was stated earlier, it is also important to know your "hot buttons," which are those words or situations that trigger your emotional response.

The most important information exchanged during conflicts and arguments is often communicated nonverbally. Nonverbal communication is conveyed by emotionally-driven facial expressions, posture, gestures, pace, and tones and intensity of voice. When people are upset, the words they use rarely convey the issues and needs at the heart of the problem. When we listen and watch for what is felt—as well as what is said—we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other

[169] Tim Porter O'Grady, "Embracing Conflict: Building a Healthy Community," http://www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/nurs/379/960/M9%20motivation%20perf%20app%2009/porter%20ogrady%20embracing%20conflict.pdf.

people. Listening in this way also strengthens us, informs us, and makes it easier for others to hear us.

When you're in the middle of a conflict, paying close attention to the other person's *nonverbal signals* may help you figure out what the other person is really saying. Your ability to accurately read another person's nonverbal signals depends on your own emotional awareness. The more aware you are of your own emotions, the easier it will be for you to pick up on the wordless clues that reveal what others are feeling. A calm tone of voice, a reassuring touch, or an interested or concerned facial expression can go a long way toward relaxing a tense exchange.

*Exercise 22: Identifying your preferred style of conflict resolution*

*Go to the following website and take the conflict resolution questionnaire found there. It will also tabulate the result and give you feedback on your conflict resolution style:*

*http://academic.engr.arizona.edu/vjohnson/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire.asp.*

Stress

We all have different ways of responding to conflicts as a result of differences in our behaviors, feelings, thoughts, and physical reactions. Conflicts often trigger strong emotions. If you aren't able to manage your emotions in times of stress, you clearly won't be able to resolve conflict successfully. When you're in control of your emotions, you can communicate your needs without threatening, frightening, or punishing others.

In the discussion about communication, it was pointed out how critical effective communicating is for building and maintaining interpersonal relationships. Stress interferes with the ability to communicate effectively and thereby resolve conflict because it interferes with accurately reading another person's nonverbal communication and hearing what someone is really saying. In that context, conflict resolution is less about a technique

that can be learned, and more about learning and practicing the ability to quickly reduce stress in the moment. It also includes the ability to remain comfortable enough with your emotions to react in constructive ways even in the midst of an argument or a perceived attack.

Being able to manage and relieve stress in the moment is the key to staying balanced, focused, and in control, no matter what challenges you face. If you don't know how to stay centered and in control of yourself, you will become overwhelmed in conflict situations and unable to respond in healthy ways. Unhealthy ways of responding to stress include becoming overly emotional, or withdrawing and becoming depressed, or becoming immobilized and unable to act.

## Ambiguity

An effective leader values clarity of direction and workflow within the organization. Perhaps the greatest enemy of accountability and work performance is continuing and unresolved ambiguity.[170] Without a doubt, ambiguity is one of the greatest causes of misunderstanding leading to conflict. Ambiguity leads people to a variety of interpretations of a particular message or communication, depending on their own view of the situation.

Ambiguity operates when the following circumstances are in place:[171]

1. Incorrect information upon which others depend for deciding what action to be taken.
2. Inadequate information, only partially representing what people need to know in order to take informed action.
3. Different levels of understanding about the information received causing individuals to act on their own differing understanding of the information.

[170] Tim Porter O'Grady, "Embracing Conflict: Building a Healthy Community," http://www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/nurs/379/960/M9%20motivation%20perf%20app%2009/porter%20ogrady%20embracing%20conflict.pdf.
[171] Tim Porter O'Grady, "Embracing Conflict: Building a Healthy Community," http://www.unc.edu/courses/2009fall/nurs/379/960/M9%20motivation%20perf%20app%2009/porter%20ogrady%20embracing%20conflict.pdf.

4. The receipt of too much information creates confusion and overload, causing individuals to act without being certain about what is desired or expected.
5. Frequent changes in direction, creating confusion and multiple shifts in appropriate response, making it difficult to determine what would be a clear action to take.

Managing Conflict

It is possible to ensure that the process of managing conflict is as positive as possible by sticking to the following guidelines: [172]

- **Make sure that good relationships are the first priority:** As far as possible, make sure that you treat the other calmly and that you try to build mutual respect. Do your best to be courteous to one another and remain constructive under pressure.[173]
- **Make conflict resolution the priority rather than winning or "being right."** Maintaining and strengthening the relationship, rather than "winning" the argument, should always be your first priority. Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint.
- **Keep people and problems separate:** Focus on what happened, not who caused it. Recognize that in many cases the other person is not just "being difficult;" real and valid differences can lie behind adversarial positions. By separating the problem from the person, real issues can be debated without damaging working relationships. By listening carefully you'll most-likely understand why the person is adopting his or her position.
- **Listen for what is felt as well as said.** When we listen we connect more deeply to our own needs and emotions, and to those of other people. Listening also strengthens us, informs us, and makes it easier for others to hear us when it's our turn to speak. To solve a problem effectively you have to understand where the other person is coming from before defending your own position.
- **Set out the "facts":** Agree and establish the objective, observable aspects of the conflict that is likely to have an impact on the decision.

[172] http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq8_conflict_resolution.htm.
[173] http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm.

- **Focus on the present.** If you're holding on to grudges based on past resentments, your ability to see the reality of the current situation will be impaired. Rather than looking at the past and assigning blame, focus on what you can do in the here-and-now to solve the problem.
- **Pick your battles.** Conflicts can be draining, so it's important to consider whether the issue is really worthy of your time and energy. Maybe you want a particular parking spot by the office, but if it leads to significant problems with others who also want that spot, perhaps arguing over this space isn't worth it.
- **Explore options together:** Be open to the idea that a third position may exist, and that you can get to this idea jointly.
- **Be willing to forgive.** Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive. Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish, which can never compensate for our losses and only adds to our injury by further depleting and draining our lives.
- **Know when to let something go.** If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree. It takes two people to keep an argument going. If a conflict is going nowhere, you can choose to disengage and move on.

Resolving conflict effectively often requires setting up ground rules for the dialogue. "Ground rules" are statements that reflect people's best intentions regarding how they wish to treat one another in civil dialogue. The greater the conflict and the more challenging the relationship problem, the more complicated the ground rules tend to be. This is in part because an implicit assumption exists that one person believes that the other won't live up to these ground rules. In work teams, this becomes even more complex, as several perspectives may co-exist in the group about what is "appropriate behavior."[174]

The following ground rules are offered as illustrations in order to inspire your work group or organization to develop rules that are appropriate to your specific needs and situation. What is important is that you identify ground rules that work for all parties as you attempt to negotiate solutions to the conflicts before you.

1) One person speaks at a time.

[174] http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq8_conflict_resolution.htm.

2) We will make a sincere commitment to listen to one another and to try to understand the other person's point of view before responding.

3) What we discuss together will be kept in confidence, unless there is explicit agreement regarding who needs to know further information.

4) We agree to talk directly with the person with whom there are concerns, and not seek to involve others in "gossip" or "alliance building."

5) We agree to try our hardest to come to agreement and trust that others are doing the same within the group.

6) We agree to attack the issues, not the personalities or personal sensitivities of the people with whom we disagree.[175]

7) We will remain calm and will try not to overreact to difficulties.

8) We will be specific about what is bothering us, since vague complaints are hard to work on.

9) We will deal with only one issue at a time, not introducing other topics until each is fully discussed.

10) Rather than accusing each other, we will focus on how the other's actions made us feel.

11) We will avoid generalizations, eliminating words like "never" or "always."

By following these rules, you can often keep contentious discussions positive and constructive. This helps to prevent the antagonism and dislike which so often causes conflict to spin out of control.[176]

To further facilitate the resolution of conflict, it is often helpful to follow this simple but challenging step-by-step problem-solving approach:[177]

[175] http://www.helpguide.org/mental/eq8_conflict_resolution.htm.
[176] http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm.
[177] This is adapted from: http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm.

Step One: Set the Scene

The resolution process should begin with a discussion to understand both sides of the problem or issue. The people involved should understand that the conflict may be a mutual problem, which may be best resolved through discussion and negotiation rather than through aggressive tactics. In this stage, it is imperative that both sides clearly define the outcomes they want. The attempt should be made to define the things that both parties agree on, as well as the ideas that have caused the disagreement.

If you are involved in the conflict, emphasize the fact that you are presenting your perception of the problem. Use active listening skills to ensure you hear and understand other's positions and perceptions.

- Restate.
- Paraphrase.
- Summarize.

When you talk, make sure that you are using a positive and mature approach rather than one that is either passive aggressive, avoiding, or dominating. It is important to use techniques such as 'I' statements (such as "I am angry") rather than "you" messages (such as "you make me angry), which often helps to avoid blaming. Ask yourself, "how much do my personal biases and prejudices affect the relationship involved in the conflict?"

It is also important to ask yourself how much control you have with respect to a particular conflict. A lot of energy can be spent attempting to mitigate a conflict over which you have little authority or control. It is much more productive to choose those "battles" that is worth the effort or price paid and put your energy into things you "can do" rather than complain about what you "can't do."

Step Two: Gather Information

Here you are trying to get to the underlying interests, needs, and concerns of the other party or parties. Ask for the other person's

viewpoint and confirm that you respect his or her opinion and need his or her cooperation to solve the problem. Listen with empathy and see the conflict from the other person's point of view. In other words, try to understand the other party's motivations and goals, and see how your actions may be affecting these.

It is useful also to prepare evidence of specific ways that another individual's behavior has disrupted the effectiveness of the team or organization. This means trying to understand the conflict in objective terms, such as:

- Is it affecting work performance?
- Is it damaging client or customer service?
- Is it disrupting team work?
- Is it hampering decision-making?
- And so on.

In this process it is important to focus on work issues and leave personalities out of the discussion.

- Identify issues clearly and concisely.
- Remain flexible.
- Clarify feelings and emotions that are occurring in this conflict.

### Step Three: Agree on the Problem

This sounds like an obvious step, but often different underlying needs, interests, and goals can cause people to perceive problems very differently. It is important to agree on the problems that you are trying to solve before it is possible to find a mutually acceptable solution. These conflict issues need to be identified clearly and concisely. This clarification can often be facilitated by identifying the root cause or causes of any problems that need to be addressed to resolve the conflict.

Sometimes different people will see different but interrelated problems. If you can't reach a common perception of the problem, then at the very least

you need to understand what the other person sees as the problem.

Step Four: Brainstorm Possible Solutions

If everyone is going to feel satisfied with the resolution, it will help if everyone has had a fair amount of input in generating solutions. Brainstorm possible solutions, and be open to all ideas, including ones that have never considered before. The aim should be the number of ideas generated at this step, rather than the "quality" of those ideas.

It may be helpful to engage in such activities as writing down three behaviors that you could change in order to reduce the conflict in a relationship, and commit to following through on these changes for at least three months. Another activity could be to make a list of five strengths that you seen in the other person or persons, and then list five ways that improving this relationship would benefit you.

Step Five: Evaluate the Alternatives

Once a number of ideas on how to solve the problem or conflict have been put forth, each should then be analyzed, considering the pros and cons of the remaining solutions. It is then recommended that the parties repeat the process until the list is narrowed down to one or two of the best ways of handling the problem or conflict.

Step Six: Negotiate a Solution

By this stage, the conflict may be resolved: Both sides may better understand the position of the other, and a mutually satisfactory solution may be clear to all.

However you may also have uncovered real differences between your positions. This is where a technique like win-win negotiation can be useful to find a solution that, at least to some extent, satisfies everyone. This topic will be covered in the next segment of this chapter.

It is important to recognize that conflicts continue to fester when ignored.

Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them. Interestingly, perceived threats are often as strong as real threats, and, of course, these perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.

Figure 11 demonstrates the significant difference between taking a positive approach to finding a mutually acceptable resolution of conflict (win/win) and more typical approaches that often don't lead to full acceptance of the results (lose/lose, compromise, or win/lose).

**Figure 11: CONFLICT RESOLUTION COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES**

| WIN-WIN | WIN-LOSE/LOSE-LOSE |
|---|---|
| Clarifying questions | Statements, Accusations |
| Empathetic agreement & disagreement | Arguing |
| Directness | Avoidance |
| Alternatives, solutions | Complaints |
| Statement of fact | Exaggeration |
| Historical reference | Rigid adherence to the past |
| Logic | Aggression |
| Affirming | "Stonewalling" |
| Humor | Sarcasm |
| Considered responses | Hasty replies |
| Specific examples | Generalizations, absolutes (always, never) |

| "I" messages | "You" messages |
|---|---|
| Specific topic | Broad area of concern |
| Compromise – by mutual consent | Compromise – by mutual disagreement and default |
| Issues | Personalities |
| Diplomacy | Insults |

Within the organization, it is very helpful to undertake some exercises that facilitate the resolution of conflict. For example, an exercise to use if you have two employees who are having an issue or a group of your staff members that has problems is to host a mediation by sitting everyone down. A mediation is a more formal activity that involves getting to the bottom of conflicts and developing a useful solution that everyone can agree on to move forward. Have a section during the mediation that allows for parties to discuss their problems and voice their opinions for a solution. Once you create a plan, work as a team to enforce it.[178]

*Exercise 23: Developing a Conflict Resolution Plan*

*Use the following template to help create an action plan regarding a specific conflict:*

*Specific conflict:*_____

_____

_____

_____

*People involved:*_____

_____

[178] http://smallbusiness.chron.com/activities-improve-conflict-resolution-skills-21933.html.

_____

_____

*Root causes of the conflict:*_____

_____

_____

_____

*Action steps to take:*_____

_____

_____

_____

*Desired outcomes:*_____

_____

_____

_____

*Means for evaluating progress toward desired results:*_____

_____

_____

_____

*Exercise 24: Resolving Conflict*

*Ask employees to keep a journal of the conflicts they are experiencing over the course of two weeks. They should note the emotions and the issues surround the conflicts. After two weeks, use the details to meet with each of them to discuss what they learned. This exercise should not be done concerning any violent or destructive conflicts, but only for those that revolve around disagreements or personalities.*

Benefits of Resolving Conflict

The good news is that by resolving conflict successfully, you can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as getting benefits that might not at first be expected:

- **Increased understanding:** The discussion needed to resolve conflict expands people's awareness of the situation, giving them an insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.
- **Increased group cohesion:** When conflict is resolved effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.
- **Improved self-knowledge:** Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail, helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.[179]
- **Increased levels of trust:** When conflict is resolved in a relationship, it builds trust. It is then possible to feel more secure in the relationship knowing it can survive challenges and disagreements.

## Negotiation Skills

The Satisfactory Resolution of Conflict through Negotiation

> *Let us never fear to negotiate. Let us never negotiate out of fear.* John F. Kennedy.

The previous segment of this chapter dealt with conflict resolution. It would appear that differences between destructive and helpful conflict are largely differences in attitude. If conflicting parties have adversarial attitudes, they will communicate with each other competitively and in other ways that inflame the conflict. On the other hand, collaborative attitudes lead to more effective communication, which reduces competition and conflict.

[179] http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm.

The ultimate key to the successful resolution of disagreements and conflicts is having all of the parties involved feel that they are winners. It is human nature to want to come out on top and to win. But winning does not have to mean that someone else has lost, or has been out-maneuvered. It is possible to end most disagreements or conflicts by creatively devising a solution that benefits all parties.

Negotiation offers an effective approach to the resolution of conflict and the improvement of relationships. It is not a complex process. However, it does involve the productive use of information to resolve disagreement or conflict between two or more parties. The emphasis is on improving the relationship between the negotiating parties through a mutual or interactive process. The real value of negotiation is its ability to resolve conflict in the most equitable and mutually satisfying way.

A wide range of definitions of negotiation exist:

Ury – *Negotiation is the process of back-and-forth communication aimed at reaching agreement with others when some of your interests are shared and some are opposed.*[180]

Maddux -- *Negotiation is the process we use to satisfy our needs when someone else controls what we want.*[181]

Dolan -- *Effective negotiation is working side-by-side with another party (or parties) to achieve mutually beneficial and satisfactory results.*[182]

Nierenberg – *People are negotiating whenever they exchange ideas with the intention of changing relationships and whenever they confer for agreement.*[183]

Schoenfield – *Negotiating is a process through which parties determine whether an acceptable agreement can be reached. It is an informational process through*

[180] William Ury. *Getting Past No: Negotiating Your Way from Confrontation to Cooperation.* New York: Bantam Books, 1993.
[181] Robert B. Maddux. *Successful Negotiation.* Los Altos CA: Crisp Publications, 1998.
[182] John Patrick Dolan. *Negotiate Like the Pros: the Essential Guide to Effective Negotiating.* East Rutherford NJ: The Putnam Publishing Group, 1992.
[183] Gerald I. Nierenberg. *The Complete Negotiator.* New York: Praeger Publishers, 1986.

*which information is exchanged, evaluated, and used as the basis for decision-making.*[184]

These varying definitions do have some important points of commonality. For example, the parties involved in a conflict or disagreement will have some basis of agreement or common interests even though they are in opposition on some important issues. Resolution of differences occurs through ongoing dialogue to discover shared interests. As time progresses, each party learns more about the other as well as about themselves. This facilitates the likelihood of making a change from the positions taken initially. A cooperative approach to negotiation shifts the interactive process from a stance "against each other across the table" to a posture that is "side by side against the problem."

Life is, in many respects, constant negotiation. Most decisions are reached through negotiation, whether we are aware of it or not. In the home, spouses continuously are involved in the resolution of disagreements or conflicts. Where to vacation? Who should take the kids to school? Which movie to see? Children jockey with their parents to get what they want, and parents try to convince their children that they want what is best for them. We may negotiate with salesmen when we buy something.

At work, we are often acting as negotiators even when we are not conscious of it. Staff try to position themselves for certain duties, or attempt to convince their boss that they deserve a raise or promotion. In economic or community development, managers have a wide range of dealings with staff, with boards of directors, and with elected officials. Managers negotiate in allocating resources, in obtaining funding, in meeting with businessmen and prospects, and in dealing with special interest groups. And so on.

It should be pointed out that "bargaining" over a price of something is not necessarily negotiation. Negotiation is more than merely a series of offers and counteroffers, which is at the heart of "bargaining." Bargaining over an item at a flea market is usually nothing more than bargaining over the

[184] Mark K. Schoenfield and Rick M. Schoenfield. *The McGraw-Hill 36-Hour Negotiating Course.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981.

price; it is not negotiation unless a sharing of information occurs to resolve an impasse.

In reality, people can effectively negotiate virtually any disagreement, conflict, purchase, or contract. Exceptions include conflicts resulting from deeply cherished beliefs or values, or when the other party refuses to cooperate. Once someone has taken a strong position based on deep-seated ideas or values, the best one can hope for is a cordial relationship rather than full resolution of the conflict.

Some people think negotiation is a dirty word. They think the process of negotiating a contract or a salary, or openly discussing a dispute, is inappropriate, frightening, demeaning, or embarrassing. What each of these reactions boils down to is a sense of awkwardness or discomfort with the communication and assertiveness skills involved in successful negotiation.

This feeling of awkwardness is most frequently caused by a lack of conscious experience with the negotiation process or by a lack of preparation before the process begins. Even though virtually all of us frequently engage in negotiation, our lack of awareness of what we are doing means that we are usually not effective negotiators. This is easy to correct by following basic negotiating principles or skills that you can practice at work or at home every day.

Negotiation is conducted at two different levels. Casual or informal negotiation is the daily activity of resolving differences that constantly arise at work, at home, and in social settings. Structured or formal negotiation is a more planned process that attempts to resolve conflicts between individuals or organizations at a more significant level. Labor-management issues, intergovernmental conflicts, important contracts, environmental and planning issues, and problems between local government and businesses are examples of typical situations that may require structured negotiation.

Structured negotiation should not be attempted until one has learned its basic principles and skills, and then has practiced it in more informal settings. In this type of negotiation, a great deal of time is spent, or should

be spent, in preparing for the process. It is more of a staged event. Positions tend to be clear. Negotiators serve in an official capacity, and may even be professionals hired just for that purpose.

It will become clear while studying this material that not all conflicts are resolvable through collaborative negotiated approaches. There are times when the parties will take an adversarial approach and a different negotiation style will be necessary. However, most negotiations take place between people that are interested in sustained and long-lasting relationships. The approach of this material is primarily directed toward those informal and formal negotiations between parties that view cooperation as more desirable than power plays. The premise underlying collaborative negotiation is that each individual is interested in improving the "working" relationship.

## Casual Negotiation

Most of the disagreement and conflict we have with others is not planned. It just happens as an ordinary occurrence. And it often happens when we least expect it. It is the nature of the human condition, as was pointed out earlier. Our goals come into conflict with those of someone else. We go into a meeting with someone with no expectations of disagreement. All of a sudden we are at an impasse in our discussion. Who is right? It usually doesn't matter. What does matter is how the issue is resolved. The question is: How do we prepare for these generally unplanned encounters so that we more effectively meet our needs without becoming adversarial?

The answer isn't easy because relationships aren't easy. Good relationships take a lot of work and time. It is difficult to prepare for an unplanned or unexpected conflict or problem. The best preparation is an ongoing effort to maintain a positive relationship with everyone with whom you have potential for conflict. Clearly, that is an unreasonable approach, because no one can anticipate every possibility for conflict.

Given the reality of multiple relationships, the most feasible way of preparing for an informal negotiation is to maintain the posture of a problem-solver. This approach will be discussed in detail as another skill

to acquire. For our purposes here it is important to think about the basic tenants of the process. They include:

- Clarifying the problem;
- Having the necessary information ready to discuss the problem;
- Developing and evaluating alternative solutions; and,
- Coming to agreement through a back-and-forth process of discussion.

Using a problem-solving approach can lessen the effect of emotions and spontaneous reactions on an informal negotiation. Inherent in a successful resolution of conflict at a casual level is effective communication, and a high level of trust, understanding, acceptance, and commitment to the relationship. *Attitude is everything*.

In order for the resolution of disagreement or conflict to take place and to endure, it must be based on an improvement of the relationship between the parties involved. People are most likely to cooperate in resolving conflict when they know that they will deal with each other again in the future. The expectation of future interactions encourages people to work cooperatively with one another in the present. Concern for the durability of the relationship ensures that people will not easily forget about how they have treated, and been treated by, one another in future interactions.

The importance of good working relationships was reinforced in a study by John Kotter of hundreds of managers in many different settings. He concluded that:

> *Good working relationships based on some combination of respect, admiration, perceived need, obligation, and friendship are a critical source of power in helping to get things done. Without these relationships, even the best possible idea could be rejected or resisted in an environment where diversity breeds suspicion and interdependence precludes giving orders to most of the relevant players. Furthermore, since there relationships serve as important information channels, without them one may never be able to*

*establish the information one needs to operate effectively.*[185]

Inherent in the concept of successful negotiation is agreement that although it takes two to have a relationship, it takes only one to change the nature of it. Just as we react to others, they react to us. By changing our behavior, we will change the way they react. We open the door to change if we improve the way we deal with others.

> *It's not what happens to you, but how you react to it that matters.* Epictetus.

Changing our own behavior is difficult, however; it requires sensitivity, motivation, and persistence. Changing the behavioral traits of someone else is almost impossible, particularly so when directly involved in handling a dispute with them. Therefore, focus should be on what you say and do when you're with a "difficult" person. Behavior between two people can be transformed when either person changes their customary pattern of relating to the other. To achieve either a good personal or working relationship, it is important to focus on what you need to do to get what you want. If you seek cooperation from others, for example, it means that you must set the example for that behavior.

In negotiation, the ability to see the situation as the other side sees it, as difficult as that may be, is one of the most important skills a negotiator can possess. It is not enough to know that the other party sees things differently. If you want to influence that party, you also need to understand empathetically the strength of the emotional force with which they believe in a particular point of view. However, understanding their point of view does not mean that you have to agree with it.

It is clear that a climate of mutual trust is critical to a successful negotiation process. No one will ever make an agreement with you that they intend to keep unless they trust you. Without trust, the relationship itself is likely to interfere with developing a mutual understanding of the problem or disagreement. This diverts energy and creativity from finding comprehensive and realistic solutions.

[185] John Kotter. *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority.* New York: Free Press, 1985, p. 40.

The time to develop a trust relationship is before the negotiation process begins. Once a relationship of trust has been established, it promotes recognition of mutual vulnerability, it prevents disruptive conflict from developing, and it encourages the sharing of information.[186] If you are clear about how the other person is likely to react, you can feel more certain the impact your own strategy or request is likely to have. Unpredictability, whether between individuals or between organizations, is what fosters instability and competitiveness.[187]

The key to successful negotiation also lies in the ability of the involved parties to communicate. Without communication there is no negotiation. *Negotiation is a process of communicating back and forth for the purpose of reaching a joint decision.*[188] Therefore, part of the preparation for a formal negotiation should be a readiness to communicate effectively.

Negotiation and communication are founded on the same basic principles. People communicate because they wish to achieve some goal, satisfy some personal need, or improve their immediate situation. Conflict arises as individuals pursue their own goals, needs, and desires. These individual pursuits all too easily lead to a breakdown in communication. It is often assumed that communication simply means telling something to somebody else. For communication to be effective, it must be a two-way process that involves effective listening as well as clear articulation of thoughts and expectations.

It is often easier to meet needs and interests in a negotiation when they are communicated. The other side may not know what your interests are, and you may not know theirs. One or both of you may be focusing on past grievances instead of future concerns. Or you may not even be listening to each other. Each communication helps establish a pattern of interaction that plays a crucial role in the ability to deal with future problems.

[186] Herb Cohen. *You Can Negotiate Anything.* New York: Bantam Books, 1980, p. 167.
[187] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get ExtraordinaryThings in Organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987, p. 141.
[188] Roger Fisher and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1981, p. 33.

Defensive communication strategies are an indication that we do not feel secure in some way, at some level. It is possible to reduce defensive climates by:

- making descriptive rather than evaluative comments,
- avoiding game-playing (such as mechanically patting people on the back) in favor of spontaneity,
- expressing genuine feelings of caring and involvement, and
- being willing to actively seek out, listen to, understand, and use other people's perspectives in the negotiation process.

Positions vs Interests

It often appears that negotiators are trying to reach agreement on specific positions they have taken or specific issues that need to be resolved. However, negotiations are never totally about what is being openly discussed or over conflicting positions. Instead, negotiations are dealing with the conflict between each side's needs, desires, concerns, and fears. These needs and concerns are interests.

It is important to understand that is interests that motivate people, not the positions they take. Your position is something you have decided upon. Your interests are what influenced your decisions about your position. For example, a potential employee may initially demand $46,000 for her salary (her position). However, her motivating and underlying interests may be in financial security, enhanced lifestyle, organizational status, or advanced career prospects.

The classic story to illustrate the difference between interests and positions describes two sisters fighting over the only orange in the family's kitchen. Each sister must have the entire orange for herself, anything less is not allowable. A wise parent asks each of the girls (in private) why she wants the orange. One explains she wants to drink the juice; the other wants to use the rind to make a cake. What each sister wants is her position; why she wants it is her interest. In this case, the simple solution is to give the cook the rind after the juice has been squeezed for the thirsty sister, thus

meeting the interests of both.

It is also important to separate the people from the problem. Religion teaches us to hate the sin and not the sinner. If we view the problem as a set of interests that needs to be resolved rather than viewing someone that holds a contrary viewpoint or position as a person to be defeated, then the odds of a successful collaboration increase.

In all negotiations, two things are bargained for: 1) the specific issues and demands, which are stated openly; and, 2) the real needs of the other side, which are rarely verbalized.[189] When preparing for a negotiation, or after it has begun, it is important not to limit the questioning to "What do they want?" The questions should also be asked, "Why do they want it?" It is equally important, and often more difficult, to ask the same questions about one's own views. Many successful negotiators find that they will be more successful if they focus on understanding their own interests as they enter discussions. If you haven't started out with a clear understanding of what you want, it will be difficult to figure out how to proceed in dealing with the other party.

Most of what is being discussed in a negotiation, and the manner in which it is being considered, is geared to satisfying psychological needs.[190] If negotiation involves the satisfaction of needs, then the process itself -- the way we go about resolving the conflict -- is important to meeting the needs of the participants. In other words, listening to what the other party has to say and trying to appreciate and understand their particular viewpoints demonstrates respect for them and their ideas.

The purpose of negotiating should be to take care of interests, not to reconcile positions. If you can make a reasonable guess about what someone's needs are, you are in a better position to influence the direction of the negotiation. In searching for the basic interests behind a declared position, look particularly for those "core" concerns that motivate all people (Maslow's seven categories of needs in order of concern):

1. Physiological needs (satisfaction of biological drives and urges; survival) (the most basic level of needs);

[189] Herb Cohen. *You Can Negotiate Anything.* New York: Bantam Books, 1980, p. 68.
[190] Herb Cohen. *You Can Negotiate Anything.* New York: Bantam Books, 1980, p. 154.

2. Safety and security needs;

3. Love and belonging needs;

4. Esteem needs (desire for self-respect, and respect and recognition from others);

5. Self-actualization needs (inner motivation; to become what one is capable of becoming);

6. Need to know and to understand; and,

7. Esthetic needs (order, balance, beauty) (the highest level of needs).

If you can sensitively respond to the most important needs of the other party, you significantly increase the chance of reaching agreement. And, if agreement is reached, the other side is more likely to keep it.

Knowledge of the interests, perceptions, and values of others does not come easily, different cultures or not, and we can never know them completely. But we will more quickly and effectively build the kind of understanding that will improve a relationship if we attempt to understand the interests of others and the perceptions and values that affect them. We can and should take steps to do so, whether or not they reciprocate.[191]

Therefore, to successfully interact with any individual in any situation, all you have to do is determine his or her needs, then work to fulfill them. Of course, this is easier said than done. However, if the opportunity permits, a rough draft can be prepared listing each party's needs, with a request for corrections. A review of the draft should demonstrate how much you understand the other party. This improves your credibility and defuses any misapprehension they might have.

When the focus is on interests rather than positions, the possibilities for exploring alternative solutions improve immensely. It is difficult to budge from a particular position, but people are less hesitant to look for a variety of ways to satisfy their interests. Furthermore, a close examination of the

[191] Roger Fisher and Scott Brown. *Getting Together: Building a Relationship that Gets to Yes.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1998, p. 73.

underlying interests in a negotiation will often reveal more interests that the parties share than ones in which they are opposed.

Your *position* in a negotiation is tied in with your attitude toward or opinion on the subject being negotiated. When you state your position, it tells the other side what you are seeking or what you view as being important to resolve. Clarifying positions can certainly lead to better understanding of one another.

A competitive situation often occurs, however, when negotiators bargain over positions, especially when they tend to lock themselves into those positions. The more you clarify your position and defend it against attack, the more committed you become to it. The more you try to convince the other side of the unlikeliness of changing your opening position, the more difficult it becomes to do so. Your ego becomes identified with your position. You now have a new interest in "saving face", which means reconciling future action with past positions. This situation makes it less and less likely that any agreement will wisely reconcile the parties' original interests.[192]

For example, the president of the local chamber of commerce states that it is his "position" that business retention should be done by the chamber. The executive director of the economic development agency states just as adamantly that business retention belongs with his organization. Neither relents. Both become angry and dig in.

Clearly, as more attention is paid to positions, less attention is devoted to meeting the underlying concerns of the parties. When the focus is on fixed positions, it becomes more likely that the negotiating parties will start to argue back and forth making demands, counter-demands, and ultimatums. This precludes the likelihood of a creative and mutually satisfying outcome. Each negotiator asserts what he will and won't do. Each side tries through sheer willpower to force the other to change its position. Anger and resentment often result as one side sees itself being pressured to give in to the other side while its own legitimate concerns are ignored. It is

[192] Roger Fisher and William Ury. *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In.* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1981, p. 5.

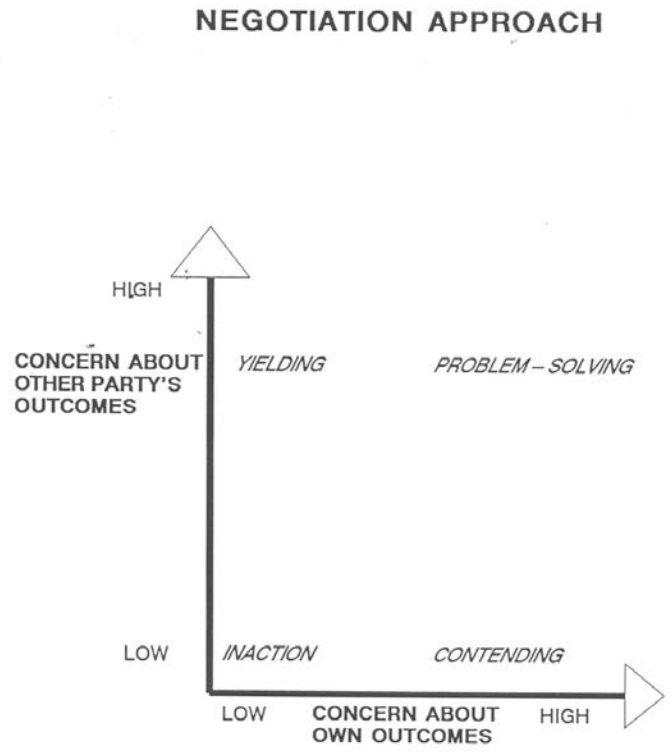
easy to see how bargaining over positions strains and sometimes shatters the relationship between the parties.

As important as positions may appear to be initially in the negotiation process, it is important not to become fixed on them. This will only lead to a confrontation. Someone will win, someone will lose; or both will lose.

## Cooperation vs Competition

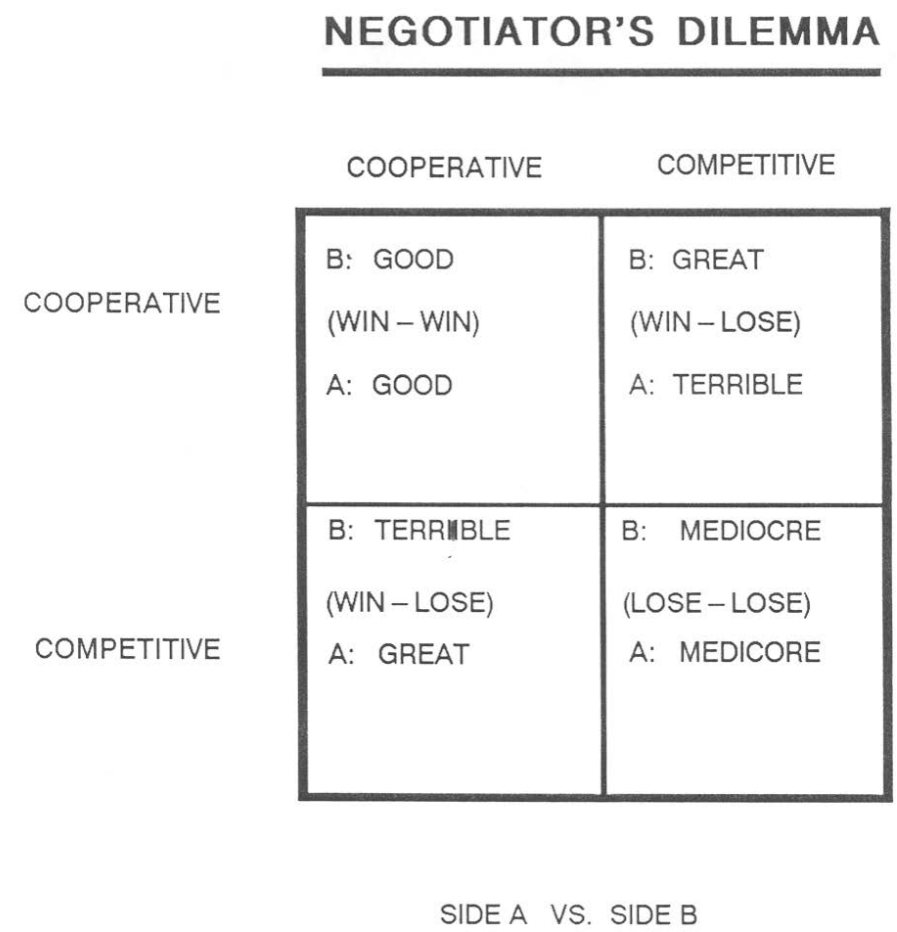
If the ultimate concern in the negotiation is on improving the relationship of the parties, clearly the focus of the process should be on addressing interests rather than positions. This is more likely if there is a cooperative spirit in the negotiation process. This is also easier said than done! Negotiators must manage the inescapable tension between cooperative moves to improve everyone's situation, and competitive moves that are based primarily on positions and self-interest (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Cooperative vs. Competitive Negotiation**



Certainly, every negotiator wants to win, which means reaching an agreement that satisfies his or her needs and interests. That is why one negotiates. However, winning can also mean, and should mean in many situations, finding out what the other side really wants and showing them a way to get it, while you still get what you want. This then becomes a win-win situation. Cooperative negotiation focuses on "what is to be gained" rather than "what is to be lost." If a genuine interest exists in developing or maintaining a satisfactory relationship with the other side, a cooperative negotiation approach is the way to go. Figure 13 demonstrates what it takes to have a win-win situation.

**Figure 13: The Negotiator's Dilemma**



A cooperative spirit is more likely if a negotiator can think about working toward obtaining something of greater value in exchange for something on which he or she places a lower relative value. Typically, some issues are more important to one party than to the other. However, both parties can win. They may have wished for more, but it is possible for both to end up satisfied. Neither side may get everything it wants, but it can get what it wants most. Benjamin Franklin expressed it well when he said:

> "*Trades would not take place unless it were advantageous to the parties concerned. Of course, it is better to strike as good a bargain as one's bargaining position admits. The worst outcome is when by overriding greed, no bargain is struck, and a trade that could have been advantageous to both parties, does not come off at all.*"

An example of this approach can be found in facility location incentives. An industrial prospect may be pushing hard on receiving tax incentives even though the community has a policy of not issuing them. However, the offer of labor training incentives, reductions on the cost of home mortgages for transferring personnel, and free extension of utilities to the site might offset the value of tax incentives. In other words, the importance of the issue of tax incentives is muted when other attractive incentives are placed on the table.

Parties seeking a mutually satisfying solution must work together to develop a list of things that they can trade. If they can find enough items they value differently, they can make a deal that takes advantage of those differences, and all will gain. The success of this type of negotiating depends on setting an appropriately cooperative tone, beginning discussions with questions rather than demands. In the absence of cooperation, it is difficult to discover what the others want most and to assess what they might be willing to trade.

The cooperative, or collaborative, negotiation process is not how many people think of negotiating. Unfortunately, it has often been portrayed as a way of gaining power over someone else; of winning at all costs (except immoral or illegal). Vince Lombardi is credited with saying that *winning is the only thing*. Typically, people think of negotiation as a way of taking

advantage of others. This is called a "win-lose" situation. One wins; the other loses. Although it is true that developing skills in negotiation can give one more power in resolving disagreements or in developing contracts, lack of concern for the other party or parties is an abuse of the process.

The need for negotiation to occur is evidence that a problem exists between two or more parties. But this does not mean that the relationship between these parties has to be competitive or adversarial. It is possible that the other party may disagree with you on a particular issue or position without viewing you as an adversary. The key is to develop a working relationship where trust, understanding, respect, and even friendship can be built up over time. This will make each new negotiation smoother and more efficient.

To avoid establishing a competitive climate with people with whom you have not had much prior contact, it is important to establish a cooperative relationship before the negotiation process begins. As part of your negotiating strategy, figure out how you can meet with the people with whom you will be negotiating well before you sit down to resolve your differences. A meal is a good place to work on relationship-building. When you set up your meeting, make it clear it is not to discuss the issues you will negotiate, but to spend some time getting to know each other away from the negotiating table. The more time you can spend building relationships before you negotiate, the more effective your negotiating session will be. You also reduce the level of tension and hostility that might otherwise be present.

As desirable as collaborative negotiating may be for building better relationships, it does not always work. Both parties have to agree to cooperate if mutual gain is to occur. As stated by G.R. Williams: *(The cooperative strategy's) major disadvantage is its vulnerability to exploitation, a problem compounded by the apparent inability of some cooperative types to recognize it when it happens. When a cooperative negotiator attempts to establish a cooperative, trusting atmosphere, in a negotiation with a tough, non-cooperative opponent, the cooperative (party) has an alarming tendency to ignore the lack of cooperation and to pursue his cooperative strategy unilaterally…. In this*

*situation, the tough negotiator is free to accept all of this fairness and cooperation without giving anything in return.*[193]

Considerable difference exists in the approach of people working in groups with cooperative goals and those in groups with competitive goals. This situation has been addressed by D. Tjosvold: *In cooperation, people realize that they are successful when others succeed and are oriented toward aiding each other to perform effectively. They encourage each other because they understand the other's priorities help them to be successful. Compatible goals promote trust. People expect help and assistance from others and are confident that they can rely on others; it is, after all, in others' self-interests to help. Expecting to get and give assistance, they accurately disclose their intentions and feelings, offer ideas and resources, and request aid. They are able to work out arrangements of exchange that leave all better off. These interactions result in friendliness, cohesion, and high morale.*

*Competitors, by contrast, recognize that others' successes threaten and frustrate their own aspirations. They are closer to reaching their goals when others perform ineffectively and fail to reach theirs. They suspect that others will not help them, for to do so would only harm their own changes of goal attainment. Indeed, they may be tempted to try to mislead and interfere in order to better reach their own goals. They are reluctant to discuss their needs and feelings or to ask for or offer assistance. Closed to being influenced by the other for fear of being exploited, they doubt that they can influence others, except by coercion and threat. These interactions result in frustration, hostility, and low productivity, especially in joint tasks.*[194]

The competitive approach (win-lose) to negotiation results, therefore, when someone attempts to achieve their objective at the expense of a perceived adversary. He/she not only disagrees with your point of view, but also gives the appearance of not liking you as a human being. In this atmosphere, there is considerable stress, judgments are easily formed, accusations may be made, and scorekeeping takes place. Once you make adversaries, they tend to stay that way for a long time, for they are difficult to convert.

[193] G. R. Williams. *Legal Negotiation and Settlement.* St. Paul MN: West, 1983, p. 54.
[194] D. Tjosvold. *Working Together to Get Things Done.* Lexington MA: Heath, 1986, p. 25.

In summary, the emphasis in negotiation should not be on slick maneuvers that finesse or manipulate the other side. Instead, the emphasis should be on the development of genuine relationships based upon trust, where both sides win. The importance of this is summarized in the following quote by John Kotter: *Good working relationships based on some combination of respect, admiration, perceived need, obligation, and friendship are a critical source of power in helping to get things done. Without these relationships, even the best possible idea could be rejected or resisted in an environment where diversity breeds suspicion and interdependence precludes giving orders to most of the relevant players. Furthermore, since these relationships serve as important information channels, without them one may never be able to establish the information one needs to operate effectively.*[195]

Furthermore, Kouzes and Posner believe that in an employee-manager relationship: *The more frequently people felt that their managers fostered collaboration and strengthened others, the higher their assessments of their managers' upward influence, credibility, and work-group esprit de corps and the higher their own levels of job satisfaction and commitment. . . . Teamwork is essential for a productive organization. Collaboration is needed to develop the commitment and skills of employees, solve problems, and respond to environmental pressures. Fostering collaboration is not just a nice idea. It is the key that leaders use to unlock the energies and talents available in their organizations.*[196]

## Using Compromise Constructively

> *Compromise is but the sacrifice of one right or good in the hope of retaining another, too often ending in the loss of both.* Tryon Edwards.

Compromise is not synonymous with collaboration. Compromise results in an agreement in which each side gives up something it really wanted. It is an outcome where no one fully meets his or her needs. When two or more groups are at a stalemate, and both recognize that they have

[195] John Kotter. *Power and Influence: Beyond Formal Authority.* New York: Free Press, 1985, p. 40.
[196] James Kouzes and Barry Posner. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get ExtraordinaryThings in Organizations.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987, p. 134 &135.

exhausted all means of persuasion, they sometimes agree to share the pain and make equal concessions.

The strategy of compromise rests on the faulty premise that your needs and mine are always in opposition. Therefore, it is never possible for mutual satisfaction to be achieved. Acting on this assumption, each of us starts out making an outlandish demand so that he can ultimately have room to make concessions.

It should be obvious that a compromise, especially one that involves a "down-the-middle" split, can produce odd results in public policymaking situations. For example, the midpoint between twelve dollars an hour and ten dollars in a collective bargaining dispute is clear, but there is no midpoint between a hydroelectric plant and a nuclear power plant.

Compromise is not always a poor choice. However, it should be thought of as a backup; in other words, a concluding strategy that may ultimately have to be used to avoid the consequence of a deadlock.

## Converting Adversaries to Partners

A major consequence of the "people problem" in negotiation is that the parties' relationship tends to become entangled with their discussion of substance. On both the giving and receiving end, we are likely to treat people and problem as one. Anger over a situation may lead you to express anger toward some human being associated with that situation in your mind.

When the other negotiating party is or becomes adversarial, it is important to take the offensive rather than become defensive. The alternative is not to turn and run, but to define the discussion or confrontation on your terms. In a negotiating situation, this involves ignoring subtle attacks and keeping your comments and attention focused on the issues. Where perceptions are inaccurate, you can look for ways to educate. If emotions run high, you can find ways for each person involved to let off steam. It might be

effective to say something to the effect of: "I feel that my focus is on … (the issue) … yet your priorities and interests seem to be elsewhere. Why don't you tell me what's bothering you so that we can resolve it and get on with our negotiation." Where misunderstanding exists, you can work to improve communication.

In many negotiations, each side explains and condemns at great length the motivations and intentions of the other side. It is more persuasive, however, to describe a problem in terms of its impact on you than in terms of what they did or why: "I feel let down" instead of "You broke your word." If I can use the right method and manner in approaching you, we can transform the shape of things to meet mutual needs, and both of us can emerge satisfied.

In a confrontational situation, it is usually more effective to use questions instead of statements. Statements generate resistance, whereas questions generate answers. Questions allow the other side to get their points across and let you understand them. They pose challenges and can be used to lead the other side to confront the problem. Questions offer them no target to strike at, no position to attack. Questions do not criticize, they educate.

Where interests are directly opposed, a negotiator may be able to obtain a favorable result simply by being stubborn. That method tends to reward intransigence and produce arbitrary results. However, you can counter such a negotiator by insisting that his single say-so is not enough and that the agreement must reflect some fair standard independent of the strong will of either side. By discussing such criteria rather than what the parties are willing or unwilling to do, neither party need give in to the other; both can defer to a fair solution.

The most powerful position in dealing with people who try to intimidate you is to stick to the fundamental issue. Keep your responses focused on the issue based on its merits and the objective criteria available. Remind the other party that you want an equitable solution.

What's Your Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement

It is typical in a negotiating situation that people make the assumption that they will reach agreement. They will reexamine their alternatives to a negotiated agreement only if the negotiation doesn't work out. This approach, however, is a serious mistake. It puts the negotiators into a weak position. Your success in negotiation ultimately depends on how well you understand your alternatives to not reaching agreement.

Remember that the purpose of negotiation is not always to reach agreement. The purpose of negotiation is to satisfy interests. The process of negotiation is to determine if you can satisfy your interests better through a negotiated settlement than you could by pursuing other alternative approaches. However, in many circumstances it is possible that you are too committed to reaching agreement. Not having developed any alternative to a negotiated solution, you are unduly pessimistic about what would happen if negotiations broke off. The relative negotiating power of two parties depends primarily upon how attractive to each is the option of not reaching agreement.

Knowing what you are going to do if the negotiation does not lead to agreement will give you additional confidence in the negotiating process. It is easier to break off negotiations if you know where you are going. The greater your willingness to break off negotiations, the more forcefully you can present your interests and the basis on which you believe an agreement should be reached. Generating alternatives to a negotiated agreement requires three distinct steps.

1. Inventing a list of actions you might conceivably take if no agreement is reached.

2. Improving some of the more promising ideas and converting them into practical options.

3. Selecting, tentatively, the one option that seems best.

It is important to know your minimum limits going into a negotiating situation. This gives you options you know you can lie with. A contingency plan is not just another option. It is a whole new strategy. It must be prepared in advance of your negotiation, whenever you have reason to believe that your initial plan won't succeed.

This is particularly important whenever you are confronted with a win-lose situation. If it is clear that the negotiation is not likely to be successful, you always have the alternative of walking away. If you are unsuccessfully negotiating with the Board over a raise, your best alternative might be to find a job somewhere else. But be prepared to follow through with such a course of action, or it is not a serious alternative.

The Structured Negotiating Process

The more formal, or structured, negotiation requires far more in the set of competencies and skills needed to be successful. The discussion of this type of negotiation is not as relevant to the purpose of this book, which is to outline the behaviors, competencies, and skills inherent in an effective leader. Countless books have been written and seminars presented on structured negotiating, which is a much more complex process than being successful in both personal and workplace casual negotiations.

**Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking**

> *The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year.* John Foster Dulles, former U.S. Secretary of State
>
> *Leadership is solving problems.* Colin Powell

At the heart of effective leadership and the collaborative process is a technique called problem-solving. Problems needing solutions are the

driving force behind any planning, negotiation, conflict-resolution, or decision-making. If there were no barriers in the way of achieving a goal, then there would be no problem. Problem-solving involves overcoming the barriers or obstacles that prevent the immediate achievement of goals.

Leaders within the organization are either solving a problem for a customer/client, supporting those who are solving problems, or discovering new problems to solve. The most successful decision-makers and negotiators are generally outstanding problem-solvers. If differences or conflicts are viewed as problems to be solved, creative solutions can be found that enhance the positions of both sides, and the parties may even be brought closer together.

Critical thinking is not a skill that everyone has, but it is a skill that everyone can develop. Everyone has the ability to think, of course, since it is human nature to do so. But much of our thinking tends to be locked in past prejudices, biases, subjective perceptions, and the lack of appropriate information. Critical thinking, on the other hand, involves a trained and disciplined approach to using the mind to process information and convert it to relevant knowledge. As the level of complexity in the economy and the community rises, the need for critical thinking is all the more important.

Critical thinking and problem solving are basically synonymous. Critical thinking involves conceptualizing an issue or problem, knowing where to look for relevant data and information, knowing how to analyze and synthesize that data and information, and then using it to make a decision that improves the situation. Effective leading always involves the solving of problems. One is not doing good critical thinking if one isn't solving any problems. Good leaders are able to anticipate problems often before they happen, and can define them clearly and precisely. They are then capable of thinking open-mindedly about the various alternative solutions to problems and then work to develop ways to prevent the problems from happening or escalating. Thinking our way through a problem to a solution, then, is critical thinking.

*Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better*

*answers.* Anthony Robbins.

Good leaders also tend to have a creative bent that allows them to see opportunities where others see obstacles. For example, one top manager may see a customer response delay as a problem, whereas another critical thinker would view it as an opportunity to improve the process to be more responsive. The leader tries to take advantage of opportunities to benefit the organization, its employees, its customers, its constituents, and its stakeholders.

Based on this discussion of critical thinking, it is clearly not a separate set of skills. It is an integration of analysis, effective communication, problem-solving, decision-making, etc. Its goal is self-improvement leading to improvement in the operation of the organization. Critical thinkers are inquisitive and seek to find the *why* behind every problem. For example, how did we as an organization get into trouble, and why did that happen?

However, although the problem-solving process is simple in nature, it is difficult for people to implement. As Scott Peck writes in *The Road Less Traveled*: *… the process of confronting and solving problems is a painful one. Problems, depending upon their nature, evoke in us frustration or grief or sadness or loneliness or guilt or regret or anger or fear or anxiety of anguish or despair. These are uncomfortable feelings, often very uncomfortable, often as painful as any kind of physical pain.*[197] Effective problem-solving requires the courage to confront these feelings, the commitment to do something, and above all the willingness to assume responsibility for solving the problem.

> *Problems are only opportunities in work clothes.* Henry Kaiser, American industrialist.

People don't problem-solve very effectively when they fear that the other party is trying to make them change, or when they feel threatened, judged, put down, or analyzed so that they will change. Such a climate produces defensiveness and resistance to change. It also inhibits self-expression and self-exploration, both of which are necessary for solving problems.

[197] Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*, New York: Touchstone, 1978, p. 16.

Furthermore, each individual finds that it is much easier to complain about the way things are than to have the courage to change them. Most people prefer an unsatisfactory present to an uncertain future. As Shakespeare's Hamlet put it, *we would rather bear those ills we have than fly to those we know not of*.

If conflicting parties do want to solve their mutual differences, most do not possess an adequate set of problem-solving skills to bring this about. With all the good intentions in the world, people often discover that where they end up is not where they wanted to be at all. Instead of solving problems, they get bogged down in defending their positions. That is why is it useful to undertake an organized or systematic procedure to arrive at mutually agreeable solutions. To that end, an effective problem-solving approach involves the following steps:

1. Defining the problem
2. Collecting information and diagnosis
3. Suggesting solutions and researching them
4. Evaluating alternatives
5. Gaining agreement and commitment
6. Finalizing a course of action (implementation procedures)

## Step 1: Statement of the Problem

A problem is basically a dilemma with no apparent way out. In human relationships, problems tend to occur as a result of opposition of ideas, goals, or needs. The first step of any effort to mitigate this opposition should always be to get agreement on a clear statement of the problem. A good problem definition states the current situation and the desired situation. For example, our responsive time for prospect inquiries over the

Internet has not been acceptable to these "customers," and we need to meet their expectations for a quick and appropriate response.

The real secret to defining the problem is having a positive attitude and trying to see every problem as an opportunity. If you can get everyone working toward the clarification of the problem and pursuing a new opportunity, they are more likely in this process to spend their energy and creativity searching for different alternatives and new ways that might accommodate the needs of all concerned. Peter Drucker advocates that we should *starve problems and start feeding opportunities*.

Any experienced problem solver will tell you that it is critical not to get locked into thinking in depth about particular solutions before you have made sure that you fully understand the problem. This is, the more you know about the inside of the problem – its nature, depth, and complexity – and about the outside of the problem – its context, background, and limits – the better you will be able to come up with a good solution. Thus, your goal should be to try to understand the problem before you let your mind fasten on any one solution. That is why the problem statement should not contain solutions, but should focus on the nature of what should be resolved.

A constructive approach to problem-solving is determining what questions need to be answered to build a complete picture of the problem. Two distinct, but related, kinds of information need to be obtained. The first is information about the current situation:

- What are you seeing or experiencing that causes you to think there is a problem?

- Who is involved in the problem? Sometimes it is possible that the problem or need does not belong to the organization or its leadership. On the other hand, it is important not to jump to "who is causing the problem?" When we are stressed, one of our first reactions is to lay blame on someone else.

- What exactly is wrong?

- When did the problem start and/or when is it happening?

- Where exactly is the problem taking place? Is it internal to the organization or external?

- Why is this problem happening; what seems to be causing it?

- What is the extent or complexity of the problem? The more complex the problem, the deeper one would have to dig. As will be demonstrated in this discussion of problem-solving, it is often helpful to break a larger problem into subsets of smaller problems to facilitate dealing with them.

- What is the urgency or priority? Some problems are more important than others. It is easy to get caught up in dealing with a complex minor issue when instead the focus should be on a major issue causing significant problems for the organization. In any case, it is often useful to prioritize which problems need to be addressed first.

The second kind of information that must be obtained involves a definition of the characteristics of the desired condition:

- What exactly would happen if the problem were solved? What is the ideal outcome? It should be absolutely clear on exactly what the expected outcome should be. This is clarifying the desired state versus the existing state.

- What evidence would be used to convince an observer that the problem has, in fact, been solved?

It must be clear to those involved in the problem-solving process that the payoffs for solving the problem are greater than the probable consequences of not solving the problem

Several common errors occur in developing a statement of the problem, regardless of whether this effort is made by an individual or a group. These common errors include:

- confusing facts with opinions or assumptions,
- confusing symptoms with cause,
- looking for scapegoats to blame,
- proposing solutions before the problem is clearly understood,
- defining the problem in a way that implies a choice must be made between two particular solutions, and
- defining the problem in such a way that it could not possibly be solved without exceeding the discretion and authority of the leader and group.[198]

Making the definition of the problem more concrete and determining what goals need to be reached are especially important. What do you want to achieve, preserve, and/or avoid? What are your priorities? What is most critical for you to achieve? What is least critical? Until you have a really clear idea of exactly what you want, it will be difficult to be satisfied with what you get; even to know when you've found the best answer.

The more clearly stated the problem is, the clearer the goals and intent of the parties involved. Broad statements of the problem should be converted to more specific or concrete statements. For example:

> General Problem: The Director of the Development Organization isn't getting along with the Board of Directors.

[198] Gary A. Yukl. *Leadership in Organizations.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1981, p. 252.

Concrete Problem: Because the Board does not have a clear picture of the responsibilities of the Development Organization, its expectations for the Director are unrealistic and ambiguous.

Once the general problem has been clearly defined and that definition is mutually agreed upon, the next step often is to break that problem into smaller parts. Typically, the general problem is too ambitious to tackle as one entity. Therefore, it is helpful to break it down into smaller and smaller sub-problems until you reach a size that you can handle.

The trick is to discover a good way of dissecting a problem so that the parts of it are relatively independent of one another. Otherwise, the solution to one part may interfere with the solution to another. For example, the general problem just stated about the Board and the Director would be an ambitious undertaking if left as stated. However, it could be broken into sub-parts such as:

- The responsibilities of the organization.
- The role of the Director in carrying them out.
- The understanding of these responsibilities and the Director's role by the members of the Board.
- The expectations of the Board
- The role of the Board in the organization.
- The communication between the Director and the Board.

Each of these parts is specific enough to facilitate a more meaningful analysis of what is causing the problem and what could alleviate these causes.

As the problem is being clearly defined, we need to think about how we deal with problems as well as thinking about the problems themselves. It

is often helpful to begin a problem-solving session by asking the involved parties to state their areas of agreement, rather than their differences. Periodically during the defining process, the parties should be asked to list the things upon which they have agreed. By doing this, it is possible to get people to see how many agreements they have reached rather than how many disagreements they have left to resolve.

As was discussed concerning conflict resolution and negotiation, the key to creative problem-solving is an understanding of the needs and desires of the other party. Unless you have a good idea of what the other person thinks the problem is, what they want, why they want it, and what they think might be fair, you will be groping in the dark for an outcome that will meet their interests as well as yours. If a negotiation is to be successful, both sides must learn to say, "If I were in their place, maybe I would take a similar position." Until you have managed to see the problem from the other person's perspective as well, you haven't really defined it.

Step 2: Researching the Problem

Good research and information-gathering is also key to defining and ultimately resolving a problem or set of problems. It is important at an early stage in this process to learn as much as possible about the problem, including talking with those individuals involved in and/or familiar with the problem. Asking insightful questions can go a long way in gaining a better understanding.

*You can see a lot by looking.* Yogi Berra

The organization needs good information to make good decisions. In the absence of good data and information, members waste time in pointless discussion over opinions, and the problem with opinions is that we all have different ones.

Collecting appropriate and accurate information is actually essential

during all phases of the problem-solving process. Throughout this process, this information is key for exploring and assessing solution options. In short, the more information that is collected about the problem and its potential solutions, the more likely that the right problem statement is crafted and workable solutions are devised. This information gathering can be facilitated by responding to the following questions:

- Do we have the relevant data, statistics, and information, and, if not, how can we collect them?
- What are the opinions, expectations, and needs of important stakeholders and customers?
- What do the experts say about important trends concerning the problem?
- What are our competitors doing related to this problem?
- Who has solved this problem before, and what did they learn?[199]

Part of the process of researching the problem involves determining its root causes. The *root cause* is a controllable, solvable force that explains why the problem exists. It's the pivotal reason that started the problem in the first place and must be dealt with in order to find a long-term workable solution. However, if the root cause is not controllable within the organization, any efforts to understand it are a waste of time in many cases.

*Effects* are often confused with causes; they are merely the by-products or symptoms of the causes. They indicate the presence of the problem, but not its real nature. Treating the effects or symptoms of the problem will not solve it. For example, if you have a headache caused by wearing the wrong glasses prescription, treating it with aspirin is treating the symptom and not dealing with the cause. If your organization is finding it difficult to raise adequate funding, the root of the problem could be lack of confidence in what the organization is achieving. A fund-raising effort in that situation is not likely to resolve the problem.

A technique that can be used to generate thinking about possible causes is brainstorming. Remember, in a brainstorming session, every possibility is initially equally valid. The idea is the get as many ideas captured as

[199]"Team Problem Solving for Pros," http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/5022_Beatty_Chapter_3.pdf.

possible in a reasonable time frame. Naïve questions should be encouraged because they help members break out of their traditional way of viewing the situation and question assumptions that may no longer be valid.

To facilitate the identification of the root cause, the Japanese have developed a procedure called the *five whys*. They ask "why" five times when confronted with a problem. By the time the fifth why is answered, they believe they have found the ultimate cause of the problem. For example, revenues for the organization have declined over the past two years.

1. Why have the revenues been declining?
   Answer: the funders have been dissatisfied with the results of the organization's efforts.

2. Why have the funders been dissatisfied?
   Answer: they haven't understood that the community has no suitable sites or buildings for new business.

3. Why haven't they understood?
   Answer: because we (the staff of the organization) haven't done a good job of explaining the real estate problem

4. Why haven't we done a good job of explaining?
   Answer: we haven't provided our stakeholders with a good education and training program so that they understand broad economic development trends and how they impact our community.

5. Why haven't we provided this training?
   Answer: we didn't think it was important.

Generally, as the team or organization delves into the problem and its possible causes, it will become clear that needed information is missing and additional information is needed to better understand what is happening and why. Frequently, this involves looking at what other organizations have done in a similar situation or reviewing the literature on the topic. It is also useful to determine what information is irrelevant to the problem.

The results of this research should be properly organized so that it can be

analyzed and packaged for its use in the problem-solving. It is often helpful to include drawings, sketches, and graphs to more clearly demonstrate the information in a more meaningful way, especially with respect to quantitative data.

Step 3: Specific Actions

It should be acknowledged that it isn't always possible or feasible to determine the cause or causes of the problem, or to do anything about them. Clearly, not all causes are controllable by the organization or correctable. Pursuit of solutions to problems that are outside of the control of the organization is a waste of time and resources.

If it has been clearly determined that the organization is in a position to address the causes for a particular problem, then the desired end result should be the solution of the problem. In that case, the search for solutions should be the primary focus. Even if there is an understanding of the cause, that doesn't have much meaning if nothing is done to change the situation and advance new solutions. This is the task of the effective leader or leaders of the organization: innovate and invent new ways of achieving improved results on a cost-effective basis.

Frequently, brainstorming by a knowledgeable team of professionals and volunteers can generate a list of possible actions that can be taken to address the problem. Facilitating this process of generating ideas is a crucial leadership skill. As is true of all brainstorming, a number of alternative actions or solutions should be generated before evaluating any of them. The question is what *could* we do to address the problem, not what *should* we do, which implies some level of analysis. These actions should be solutions directed to the problem and its possible causes rather than merely a list of typical organizational activities.

Example dealing with lack of adequate funding:

*Cause*
Funders for the organization do not have a clear concept of the mission of the organization.

*Actions*
- Conduct a workshop or retreat for the funders and stakeholders with respect to economic development trends and the activity of the organization.
- Review the mission of the organization with the Board and key stakeholders and receive feedback from them that they understand the purpose and needs of the organization.
- Prepare a report for the funders and stakeholders demonstrating the impact of the programs of the organization on the local economy.

These solutions or actions should be measurable and their successful implementation should lead to the solution of the problem.

Step 4: Evaluation of Actions

It is important to remember that every alternative action for a particular problem is not necessarily an option to take. It only becomes an option when it becomes a real possibility for action and it would lead to a solution or partial solution to the problem. This involves determining which alternatives are most cost-effective and beneficial for solving the problem.

To that end, it is often useful to move through a process in which the actions are assigned weights or priorities. The basis for the weighting should be how effectively the action is likely to address the cause or causes of the problem and how cost-effective it will be.

Example

Action -- Prepare a report for the funders and stakeholders demonstrating the impact of the programs of the organization on the local economy

- Who should prepare the report?
- How much will it cost to do (time and money)?
- What kind of resources and staffing will it take?
- What would be the timing of it?
- What will we learn or gain from it (the outcome)?

Based on a weighting or priority-determining process, the team or organization should come to a decision on the top actions to pursue. Additional research may well be needed to further define the action, its cost and timing, and its likely impact on the desired results. These actions should be incorporated into the organization's strategic action plan and its work plan to ensure their implementation. Figure 14 is an example of a weighting template.

## Figure 14: Rating Alternatives for Organizational Activities

**RATING ALTERNATIVES FOR ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

In evaluating a set of solutions to an economic development organizational problem, the various organizations in the community can formulate criteria to assist in making a choice. For example, which organization in the community should be responsible for primary contact with outside prospects?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
ACTIVITY_____

| Attributes | Chamber of Commerce | Port/ Airport | Parish or City | Industrial Dev. Found. | Utility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff capabilty | | | | | |
| Community support | | | | | |
| Image of org. from outside viewpoint | | | | | |
| Timeliness of response | | | | | |
| Confiden-tiality | | | | | |
| Research & data support | | | | | |
| Funding availability | | | | | |

(5 = most appropriate; 1 = highly unsatisfactory)

TOTAL POINTS_____

## Step 5: Gaining Agreement and Commitment

During the previous steps in the problem-solving process, leadership should build the commitment of those involved. If someone is involved in each step previously discussed, it is much more likely that he or she will agree with the results and commit to implementing them.

Sometimes it is useful to craft a Memorandum of Agreement that outlines

and clarifies in writing the results of the problem-solving process. Each involved member of that process should then sign it, which serves to facilitate commitment to the implementing of the solution.

Step 6: Implementing the Solutions

> *Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.* Peter Drucker.

Leaders are likely to be called upon to facilitate the implementing of the solution or solutions within the organization. This can be accomplished most effectively by involving others as a means for minimizing resistance to the change likely to occur.

At the implementing stage, certain elements of the solution may need to be delegated out to various people inside and outside the group. Group members may also be assigned to implement a particular part of the solution based on their role in the decision-making or because it relates to their area of expertise. Likewise, group members may be tasked with publicizing the solution or "selling" it to a particular group of stakeholders.

Part of the process of implementation should be the continuous monitoring and evaluation of its progress, especially comparing that to the stated expected outcomes. This can help guarantee an ability to gauge the effectiveness of the solution and to adapt to future changes that may be needed. An evaluation can take many forms and be as simple as brief conversations with key individuals or as elaborate as sophisticated surveys. The leadership of the organization should decide how detailed the evaluation should be based upon the complexity of the problem and the decided solution.

It is good practice in the implementation stage to keep a record of outcomes and any additional problems that occurred. Implementing solutions is a dynamic process, and as circumstances change it is important to be able to track what previously worked or didn't work.

*Exercise 25: Choose a relatively simple problem that is common throughout the organization. Work through the problem-solving process, arriving at a brief action agenda.*

*1. Begin by more clearly defining the problem.*

*2. Once the problem is clearer, move on to discussing possible causes of the problem.*

*3. Determine what information is needed and what research could be conducted to provide a clearer picture of the problem and its causes.*

*4. List positive actions that could be taken to remedy these causes.*

*5. Discuss how well the team worked together and what positive things happened that demonstrated teamwork.*

*6. What negative things happened that were a barrier or impediment to teamwork?*

*7. Discuss the nature of the team process in light of this problem-solving experience.*

## Decision-Making

*Be willing to make decisions. That's the most important quality in a good leader.* T. Boone Pickens, business billionaire.

*Nothing is more difficult, and therefore more precious, than to be able to decide.* Napoleon I.

One of the most important skills a leader needs is to be able to make decisions and to be willing to do so. When we think about what makes someone a great leader, one characteristic that comes into mind is decisiveness. Effective leaders are effective decision-makers. However, even more important is the leader's ability to guide a group or the organization to a decision that those involved can support and carry out wholeheartedly.

*In any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing, the next best thing is the wrong thing, and the worst thing you can do is*

*nothing*. Attributed to Theodore Roosevelt.

However, it is frequently demonstrated that the decision-making in many organizations leaves a lot to be desired. In many leadership situations, there may be too many or too few people with authority to decide, resources may be too dispersed or inadequate to needs, or key leaders or stakeholders may have conflicting or frustratingly vague goals. Additionally, the information that is needed may be incomplete, or aspects of the organization's culture and other group influences may be getting in the way of reasoned and rational choice.

Unfortunately, most of us are not taught decision-making skills as we move through our education and our job. At the same time, for many business leaders it is a complex and uncomfortable part of their job, especially when the stakes are high. Every decision requires making a choice between two or more possibilities, and every decision will have consequences; doors will open and doors will close; people will either agree or disagree with you. We quickly learn that you can't always please everyone.

The skill of problem-solving discussed previously is one process that leads to improved decision-making. Both problem-solving and decision-making require creativity in identifying and developing appropriate and effective options. Both skill sets are also outcome-oriented and results-driven, knowing the direction to go. Leadership is all about having a vision of where you want to be and making decisions along the way to get closer to achieving this vision.

A leader must also be able to wade through information, determine what's relevant, make a well-considered decision, and take action based on that decision. However, making decisions too quickly or too slowly impedes leadership effectiveness. It should also be remembered that decision-making in leadership involves followers, so making a decision that will be accepted by others and acted on will usually require being aware of what followers are likely to accept, and the ability to communicate the decision to them and inspire the team to follow.

Clearly, we all have to make decisions continually, and some are more

important than others. Some people put off making decisions by endlessly searching for more information or getting other people to offer their recommendations. Others resort to decision-making by taking a vote, throwing a dart at a list, or tossing a coin.

It is important to note that each leader also has his or her own leadership style. When making decisions, it is important that leaders stick with their own preferences and leadership style as much as possible. However, they must balance their style with the interests of others in the organization. If a leader has an autocratic style, for instance, he or she needs to weigh his or her own independence in decision-making with the desire of the employees to participate. A more accessible leadership style helps get employees involved, but there may be a need to act autonomously when time is of the essence in a decision.

> *We know what happens to people who stay in the middle of the road. They get run down.* Aneurin Bevan.

As important as making good decisions is, many often find it hard to make decisions, especially those that are more difficult or complex. This is especially true in organizations. Effective leaders in those organizations do not make decisions in isolation. Although these leaders may carry the burden of key decisions for the organization, they also have the responsibility to make sure that decisions get made at all levels of the organization. Therefore, they work with others to improve the organization's processes, structure, and effectiveness by engaging them in their own level of decision-making and reaching appropriate conclusions. Doing this effectively not only improves the quality of the decision, but also ensures that everyone is more committed to implementing it. This increases the motivation of employees, which results in higher productivity and customer service. Regardless of how difficult and complex organizational decisions are, the final decisions will have a significant impact on staff, stakeholders, and customers.

When decisions are made in groups or organizations, clearly the process is more complex and challenging than faced in personal decision-making. Group decision-making also provides a number of benefits, although

involving a group of people may pose a problem. For example, the group process can appear fair and democratic but really only be a gesture that covers up the fact that certain group members or the group leader have already decided. Group decision-making also takes more time than individual decisions and can be burdensome if some group members do not do their assigned work, divert the group with self-centered or unproductive behaviors, or miss meetings.

Conversely, though, group decisions are often more informed, since all group members develop a shared understanding of a problem through discussion and debate. The shared understanding may also be more complex and deep than what an individual would develop, because the group members are exposed to a variety of viewpoints that can broaden their own perspectives.

This situation in which a group finds itself certainly affects decision-making. One key aspect is the degree of freedom that the group possesses to make its own decisions, secure its own resources, and initiate its own actions. Some groups have to go through multiple approval processes before they can do anything, while others are self-directed, self-governing, and self-sustaining.

Uncertainty also has a major impact on decision-making. In general, groups deal with more uncertainty in decision-making than do individuals because of the increased number of variables that comes with adding more people to a situation. Individual group members can't know what other group members are thinking, whether or not they are doing their work, and how committed they are to the group. So the size of a group is a powerful situational influence, as it adds to uncertainty and complicates communication.

Organizations, which are more formally structured than ad hoc groups, have routines, practices, processes, missions, and cultures that condition how problems are defined, information is shared, goals are identified, options are generated, and, ultimately, how decisions are made. All of this needs to be taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The creativity and effectiveness of this process is certainly impacted by the

nature of the organization itself.[200]

Access to information also influences a group. First of all, the nature of the group's task or problem affects its ability to get information. Group members can more easily make decisions about a problem when other groups have similarly experienced it. Even if the problem is complex and serious, the group can learn from other situations and apply what it learns. Second, the group must have access to needed information. Access to archives, electronic databases, and individuals with relevant experience is necessary to obtain any relevant information about similar problems or to do research on a new or unique problem. In this regard, group members' formal and information network connections also become important situational influences.

Group decisions also benefit from synergy, one of the key advantages of group communication that was discussed earlier. Most groups do not use a specific method of decision-making, perhaps thinking that they'll work things out as they go. This can lead to unequal participation, premature decisions, prolonged discussion, and a host of other negative consequences. For those reasons, the following discussion will focus on some practices that will lead to good decision-making and help reach a final decision.

Regardless of the effort that is put into making a decision, it should be accepted that some decisions will not be the best possible choice. In its simplest sense: ***d****ecision-making is the act of choosing between two or more courses of action*. However, it should always be remembered that a "correct" decision may not exist among the available choices. A better choice may exist that had not been considered, or the appropriate information may not have been available at the time.

Although decisions can be made using either intuition or reasoning, a combination of both approaches is often used. Whatever approach is used, it is usually helpful to structure decision-making in order to:

[200]Decision-Making for Leaders, *A Synthesis of Ideas from the Harvard UniversityAdvanced Leadership Initiative Think Tank*, March 29 – 31, 2012 | Cambridge, MA. http://advancedleadership.harvard.edu/Portals/115252/docs/Decision_Making_ThinkTank_Final.pdf.

- Reduce more complicated decisions down to simpler steps.

- Gain a better understanding of how any decisions are arrived at.

- Plan the decision-making process so the needed decisions will meet deadlines.

Stages of Decision Making

Many different techniques of decision-making have been developed, ranging from simple rules of thumb to extremely complex procedures. The method used depends on the nature of the decision to be made and how complex it is. One of the most effective methods has the following stages, which are quite similar to those of problem-solving:

1. Clarifying and being explicit about the decision that needs to be made.
2. Deciding who is responsible for the decision.
3. Listing all possible solutions/options.
4. Setting a time frame.
5. Information gathering.
6. Weighing the risks involved.
7. Deciding on the values and what is important.
8. Weighing the pros and cons of each course of action.
9. Making the decision.
10. Communicating the decision.

1. Clarifying and being explicit about the decision that needs to be made

The first step in making a decision is the articulation of what exactly needs to be decided. This may sound obvious, but far too frequently the issues surrounding the needed decision are ambiguous, and it may not be clear who or what will be impacted by the decision.

2. Deciding who is responsible for the decision

Before making a decision, it needs to be clear who is going to take

responsibility for the decision. Remember that it is not always those making the decision who have to assume responsibility for it. Is it an individual, a group, or an organization? This is a key question because the degree to which responsibility for a decision is shared can greatly influence how much **risk** people are willing to take.

If the decision-making is for the workplace, then it is helpful to consider the structure of the organization. Is the individual responsible for the decisions he or she makes or does the organization hold ultimate responsibility? Who has to carry out the course of action decided? Who will it affect if something goes wrong? Is there a willingness to take responsibility for a mistake?

Finally, it is important to know who can actually make the decision? When helping a friend, colleague or client to reach a decision, in most circumstances the final decision and responsibility will be taken by them. Whenever possible with respect to an important decision for the organization, it is better to come to a formal agreement as to who is responsible for a decision, especially if it isn't obvious.

It may also be important to determine what method will be used to make the decision. Will there need to be a consensus, where everyone must be able to live with and support the decision? Will it be a majority vote? And so forth.

3. Listing possible solutions/options

In order to come up with a list of all the possible solutions and/or options available it is usually appropriate to work on a group (or individual) problem-solving process. This process, could include brainstorming or some other 'idea generating' process.

This stage is important to the overall decision-making processes as a decision will be made from a selection of choices. Always remember to consider the possibility of not making a decision or doing nothing, and be aware that both options are actually potential solutions in themselves.

One of the decision-making mistakes that is commonly made is to create a

lot of options. The thinking is that if every possible alternative is considered, better choices are likely and the best decision is made. Sometimes an exhaustive search is used as a way to resolve uncertainty. The assumption is that if everything is considered, no stone will be left unturned and there will be no uncertainty. The problem is that this can lead to being overwhelmed, resulting in the failure to make a decision.

Numerous studies show that when there are more than five or six options, people have a more difficult time deciding and often opt not to make a decision. To help effectively and efficiently make decisions, options should be limited. If the options are kept to fewer than five it is usually much easier to make a decision.[201]

4. Setting a timeframe

In deciding how much time to make available for the decision-making process, it helps to consider the following:

- How much time is available to spend on this decision?
- Is there a deadline for making a decision and what are the consequences of missing this deadline?
- Is there an advantage in making a quick decision?
- How important is it to make a decision?
- How important is it that the decision is right?
- Will spending more time improve the quality of the decision?

Effective decision-making shouldn't be hurried. A quick decision is often not the best decision. If there isn't an imperative reason to push a decision, then a slower and more thought out approach is recommended. If there seems to be urgency in making a decision, it might be worthwhile to ask why a decision must be made immediately. If the decision process can wait

[201] Larina Kase, "Great Leaders Are Great Decision Makers, *Graziadio Business Review*, 2010 Vol. 13 #4. http://gbr.pepperdine.edu/2010/10/great-leaders-are-great-decision-makers/.

for research and input, it will be more possible to gain additional points of view that would lead to a better decision.

5. Information Gathering

Before starting on the process of making a decision, all relevant information needs to be gathered. If the information is inadequate or out-dated, then it is more likely that a wrong decision might be made. Also, if a lot of irrelevant information has been made available, then the decision will be difficult to make because of the distraction of unnecessary factors.

Good decisions require up-to-date, accurate information. The amount of time spent on information gathering has to be weighed against how much you are willing to risk making the wrong decision. In a group situation, such as at work, it may be appropriate for different people to research different aspects of the information required. For example different people might be allocated to concentrate their research on costs, facilities, availability, and so on.

When leaders pursue information in their quest to make a decision, they must also know when to stop. While a large amount of data may be desirable in a perfect world, the data gathering process can take up too much time, and too much data and information can also be paralyzing and take attention away from the big picture. The question must continually be asked, what do we need to know to make a good decision, where can we find this information, and is what we find relevant to our decision-making process.

6.Weighing the risks involved

One key question is how much risk should be taken in making the decision? Generally, the amount of risk an individual is willing to take depends on:

- The seriousness of the consequences of taking the wrong decision.
- The benefits of making the right decision.

- Not only how bad the worst outcome might be, but also how likely that outcome is to happen.

It is also useful to consider what the risk of the worst possible outcome occurring might be, and to decide if the risk is acceptable. The choice can be between going "all out for success" or making a safe decision. Accountability for a decision and the unpredictability or uncertainty that surrounds most decision-making within an organization means that a person has to assume some degree of risk with each decision. No decision of importance can avoid all risk, because no one can foresee all consequences of a decision. An effective leader must not be afraid to take risks and then be accountable for all the decisions that he or she makes, whether they turn out to be right or wrong. Unfortunately, a lot of people do not like to make mistakes, so they avoid making any decisions that could be risky or a problem. They don't want to be held accountable for anything that goes wrong.

7. Deciding on the values and level of importance

Everybody has their own unique set of values, which is what they believe to be important. Stakeholders for the organization may have one set of values and expectations, top management may have another, and the organization's customers may value still other aspects.

Depending on which values are considered important, different opinions may seem more or less attractive. If the responsibility for a decision is shared, it is possible that one person might not have the same values as the others. In such cases, it is important to obtain a consensus as to which values are to be given the most weight. It is important that the values on which a decision is made are understood because they will have a strong influence on the final choice.

People do not make decisions based on just one of their values. They will consider all their values which are relevant to the decision and prioritise them in order of importance. For example, if you were to buy a house, what would be the five most important factors to you?

8.Weighing the pros and cons

It is possible to evaluate the pros and cons of each possible solution/option by considering the possible advantages and disadvantages.

One aid to evaluating any solution/option is to use a 'balance sheet', weighing the pros and cons (benefits and costs) associated with that solution. For example, the economic development organization that regularly leases vehicles from an external company might consider buying a vehicle for their exclusive use.

Using the question: "*Should we create a new website?*" - the organization could list the pros and cons of the decision in the following way:

**Figure 15: Weighing the Pros and Cons of Decisions**

| Pros | Cons |
|---|---|
| **Attract more prospect attention** | **Cost of getting it done** |
| **Would make it easier to organize information for the organization** | **Staff would require training to use it** |
| **Will always be more easily updated** | **More frequent attention paid to updating** |

Having listed the pros and cons, it may be possible to immediately decide whether the option of creating a new website is viable.

However, it may be useful to rate each of the pros and cons on a simple 1 to 10 scale (with 10 high - most important to 1 low - least important):

| Pros | Weighting | Cons | Weighting |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Attract more prospect attention** | **9** | **Cost of getting it done** | **6** |
| **Would make it easier to organize information for the organization** | **7** | **Staff would require training to use it** | **4** |
| **Will always be more easily updated** | **6** | **More frequent attention paid to updating** | **8** |
| **Total** | **22** | **Total** | **18** |

In this case the cons (disadvantages) have the lower score while the pros (benefits) are higher and creation of a new website is therefore a strong possible choice.

In scoring each of the pros and cons it helps to take into account how important each item on the list is in meeting key considerations. For example, if the most important consideration was the potential saving, then the fact that changing the website will add considerable costs to the organization at a time of a tight budget will increase its score on the con side.

This balance sheet approach allows both the information to be taken into account as well as the key considerations and values, and presents them in a clear and straight forward manner.

Other techniques can be used to evaluate options, such as force-field analysis, etc. However, these will not be discussed in this book so as to limit the amount of detail being covered.

9.Making the Decision

Many techniques can be used to help in reaching a decision. The pros and cons method (as above) is just one way of evaluating each of the possible solutions/options available.

Other techniques exist that allow for more direct comparisons between possible solutions. These can be more complicated and generally involve a certain amount of calculation. However, these can be particularly helpful when it is necessary to weigh up a number of conflicting values and options. A detailed cost/benefit analysis is one example of a more complex approach.

In addition to making reasoned decisions using the techniques shown above, in many cases people use an intuitive approach to decision-making. Generally, the more one knows about a subject, the more reliable his/her intuition will be. Therefore, intuition is a perfectly acceptable means of making a decision, although it is generally more appropriate when the decision is of a simple nature or needs to be made quickly. In more frequent and less complicated situations, the truth is that we tend to use our "gut" as much as or possibly more than our "brains." However, it is important to be wary of impulsive reactions to a situation, which is why more complicated decisions tend to require a more formal, structured approach.

Many factors can influence the decision-making process that are not always evident. For example, prejudice or wishful thinking might affect judgment. Reliance is often placed on past experience without consideration of past mistakes. Making a decision using intuition alone should be an option and not done merely because it is the easy way out, or because other methods are more difficult.

Leaders are able to incorporate both their intuition and their knowledge into their decision-making. Additionally, they learn to deal effectively with their emotional reaction to a critical high-stakes situation. When we get into the emotional part of our brain, our innate reaction is to protect ourselves. We get an adrenaline rush or flight-or-fight response, and short-

term survival is the immediate goal. As you can imagine, being in this state is not particularly conducive to making strategic, long-term decisions. This is why emotional self-control is so important. Great leaders are aware of their emotional state and are able to manage intense emotions so they can make smart decisions. The goal, however, is not to take feelings out of the decision-making process. It is simply to keep them from taking over and losing emotional self-control.[202]

In more formal and complex decision-making situations, it is often valuable to keep a record of how any decision was made, what information it was based on, and who was involved. Enough information needs to be kept to justify that decision in the future so that, if something does go wrong and the decision is criticized, it is possible to show that the decision was reasonable in the circumstance and given the knowledge held at the time. Hindsight might not be able to correct past mistakes, but it will aid improved decision-making in the future.

If possible, it is also best to allow time to reflect on a decision once it has been reached. It is preferable to sleep on it before announcing it to others. Once a decision is made public, it is very difficult to change.

The nature of decision-making can vary considerably depending on the approach being taken. It can range from autocratic, where the "boss" makes all the key decisions, to a very democratic team-based process. No one correct approach exists, because the circumstances surrounding the decision can vary considerably. Effective leaders need to know when to use each approach, with the desired outcome to be a wise decision that improves the performance and sustainability of the organization. These approaches that can be taken by organizational leadership are illustrated in Figure 16.

[202] Larina Kase, "Great Leaders Are Great Decision Makers, *Graziadio Business Review,* 2010 Vol. 13 #4.

**Figure 16: Leadership Approaches to Group Participation in Decision-Making[203]**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Decide** | You make the decision along and either announce or "sell" it to the group. You may use your expertise in collecting information from the group or others that you consider relevant to the problem. |
| **Consult (individually)** | You present the problem to group members individually, get their suggestions, and then make the decision. |
| **Consult (group)** | You present the problem to group members in a meeting, get their suggestions, and then make the decision. |
| **Facilitate** | You present the problem to the group in a meeting. You act as facilitator, defining the problem to be solved and the boundaries within which the decision must be made. Your objective is to get concurrence on a decision. Above all, you take care to ensure that your ideas are not given any greater weight than those of others simply because of your position. |
| **Delegate** | You permit the group to make the decision within prescribed limits. The group undertakes the identifying and diagnosis of the problem, developing alternative procedures for solving it, and deciding on one or more alternative solutions. While you play no direct role in the group's deliberations unless explicitly asked, your role is an important one behind the scenes, providing needed resources and encouragement. |

10.Communicating the decision.

It is easy to overlook the communication of the decision once it has been made, and yet the success of a decision depends considerably on how well it is communicated and to whom. It should be decided who needs to know, how will the message be most effectively shared, and who will deliver it.

In summary, decision-making is the act of choosing between a number of alternatives. In the wider process of problem-solving, decision-making involves choosing between possible solutions to a problem. Decisions can be made through either an intuitive or reasoned process, or a combination

[203] Victor H. Vroom, "Educating Managers for Decision Making and Leadership," http://www.hr-meter.com/files/vroomartikelfuerweb.pdf.

of the two. They can be made by an individual or by a group. It should always be remembered that no decision-making technique should be used as an alternative to good judgment and critical thinking. All decision-making involves individual judgment, and systematic techniques are merely there to assist those judgments.[204]

As has been pointed out in this discussion, a number of stages usually exist to any structured decision-making. The goal is to have a decision-making process in place that uses all of an organization's assets and, therefore, makes an executive a true leader for every member of the team and not just those who are in the inner circle.

*Exercise 26: Weighing the Pros and Cons for a Decision*

*As a group within your organization, or as the organization as a whole, choose a particular issue or concern for which a decision has not been made and move through the exercise of weighing the pros and cons as demonstrated in Figure 15.*

**Facilitation**

> *A facilitative leader is someone who acts on the premise that a leader does not do for others what they can do for themselves.* Fran Rees

An important key to the effective leadership of a group or organization is the skill of facilitation. The definition of *facilitate* is "to make easy" or "ease a process." This skill is all about helping a group of people to decide what results they want to achieve together, how they want to achieve them, and then helping the group to achieve them. Increasingly rapid change and socio-economic complexity are forcing organizations to move increasingly toward staff and member involvement, either formally or informally. Unfortunately, far too many organizational leaders do not fully understand group dynamics and therefore lack the skills needed to transform groups of individuals into effective teams.

[204] http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/decision-making2.html#ixzz2j7gyZZDG.

Clearly, no single leader in an organization can see or deal with all that is happening and that needs to be done. That is why group dynamics has become a major factor in sustaining a successful organization. The skill of effective facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking the reins. The role of the facilitative leader is to shape and guide the process of working together so that the team or organization can bring about the achievement of the organization's goals and desired outcomes.

The command and control styles of leadership of the past are succumbing to a move toward employee empowerment. People on the front lines now tend to have the information they need to respond to changes rapidly once given the authority and tools they need to act. However, in crisis situations, with little time for discussion, command and control is often the leadership style of choice.[205]

Facilitative leadership, which will be defined shortly, isn't always appropriate, but it yields the best results when there's time to use it**.** However, the type of leadership used by individuals in the organization depends on the abilities, situation, and culture of that organization. For instance, facilitative approaches often fall flat in groups who are just learning the basic skills their work demands, or who have temperaments that require constant direction.

A good facilitator can provide a number of important benefits to the organization. For example, in conducting meetings he or she can: [206]

- help the group clarify its goals or desired outcomes;
- keep meetings focused on the subject of discussion or on dealing with the problem at hand;
- remind participants to consider the broader context of organizational issues;
- move meetings along in a timely manner;
- use useful small group techniques to work through issues or problems;

[205] Steve Davis, "Facilitation as a Leadership Style." http://facilitatoru.com/blog/facilitation/facilitation-as-a-leadership-style/.
[206] Adapted from Pickett Institute Curriculum, ILJ, 2002 • 1; http://www.ilj.org/publications/docs/Facilitation_Skills_Developing_Facilitative_Leadership.pdf.

- periodically summarize the group consensus on issues to validate and clarify the progress of the discussion within meetings;
- help the group move toward achieving useful organizational outcomes in the meeting; and
- give the group a sense of accomplishment.

Beyond the meeting environment, what sets a facilitative leader apart from other leaders is that he or she:

- Does not evaluate or criticize ideas coming out of the group;
- Enables rather than directs the group process, focusing on a problem-solving approach;
- Knows how to ask questions instead of giving answers;
- Strives for consensus decision-making;
- Helps the organization move toward becoming a team and achieving useful organizational outcomes;
- Provides a neutral perspective throughout the team process;
- Encourages team behavior in the organization's planning and working;
- Helps find win/win solutions so that everyone receives benefits; and
- Makes sure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and that no one dominates a discussion.

A good facilitator is an effective communicator. He or she works to ensure a culture of two-way communicating that emphasizes active listening as well as demonstrating a caring concern for one another. The communication skills previously discussed are an important consideration in gaining the skill of facilitating.

Another of the important facilitation skills is the ability to promote *dialogue* in the organization rather than limiting interaction to mere discussion. Discussion is the way that most people communicate. Discussion is certainly communication, but often it is like a ping-pong game going back and forth and leading nowhere. During discussion, ideas are presented and the parties involved analyze them from their particular points of view. As a result, discussion tends to be competitive with a goal of winning, and therefore can foster disagreement, frustration, and confusion. If you are only listening in order to prepare your own counter-arguments, you are involved in a discussion. During the discussion you will support your idea

and give your points more strongly until, eventually, others agree with you. You want to prove that you are right, and the most knowledgeable, as does everyone else in the discussion. With everyone trying to win the argument, it is difficult to make a decision. This leads to an opportunity for someone to take charge and make a unilateral decision that doesn't reflect the wishes of anyone else.

Dialogue, on the other hand, is an exploration of ideas with the intent of building shared meaning within the group or team. In a dialogue, no one is trying to win. They are trying to learn and create. They suspend their individual assumptions and explore everyone's ideas and issues. During dialogue everyone works together contributing towards the ideas, a process that can work more smoothly with a skilled facilitator. Effective dialogue begins by demonstrating a good understanding of the position the facilitator wishes to influence and a "real" interest in hearing the ideas and points of view of the other party. Dialogue requires a complete shift in mindset from telling others what you think, to inquiring of them what they think.[207]

Dialogue rather than mere discussion is occurring when everyone in the group or team is involved, and they are listening carefully. Generally, dialogue is evidenced in the increased level of excitement going on, and the willingness to explore ideas with one another. As a result, dialogue leads to insights that wouldn't be likely in mere conversation or individual thought. It has been said that *in dialogue people become observers of their own thinking*.[208] They move from entrenched ideas to collective thinking, which involves a suspension of many of the assumptions that are individually held. Dialogue comes to a grinding halt when someone's assumptions color their thinking and they become entrenched in their points of view. dig in their heels and say "this is the only way". Suspending one's assumptions is not easy, as often they are so deep seated that we don't even know that they are assumptions! Instead, we take them for being the truth. [209]

[207] http://www.hendersongroup.com/articles/tips-for-effective-dialogue-dialogue-vs-discussion.asp.
[208] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization*, New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990, p. 242.
[209] http://EzineArticles.com/43241.

It is the role of the facilitative leader to move the group away from discussion into dialogue. Facilitation skills enable the leader to help everyone keep their ownership of the process and its outcomes, and to keep the dialogue moving. A skilled facilitator can also help ensure that assumptions are being suspended. This means questioning statements and beliefs as they are mentioned. The facilitator must also walk a careful line between being knowledgeable and helpful while involved with the group, but not taking on the "expert" role that would shift attention away from the members of the team and their own ideas and responsibilities.[210]

However, the facilitative leader is more than one who ensures that everyone is engaged in dialogue rather than slipping into mere discussion. A good facilitator often needs to influence the flow of ideas through his or her active participation. As Peter Senge has stated, *the artistry of dialogue lies in experiencing the flow of meaning and seeing the one thing that needs to be said now.*[211] The ability to do this meaningfully usually requires a great deal of experience on the part of the leader so that the input is appropriate and relevant.

The following exercises are an overall assessment of the leadership skills you as an individual possess. They are designed to help you more objectively determine your capacity as a leader and that of your staff.

### *Exercise 27: Leadership Self Assessment*[212]

Read each of the characteristics below and their descriptions. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the degree to which you believe you possess that characteristic. Save this worksheet so you can try it again in a few months and see if you have changed!

**How Much of a Leader Are You?**

| Quality | Description | Range (low……..…high) |
|---|---|---|
| Drive | the will to push hard toward a goal | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

[210] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization,* New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990, p. 246.
[211] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization,* New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990, p. 247.
[212] NFTE.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Perseverance | ability to stick to a task or goal | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Risk-taking | willingness to take chances | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Organization | ability to keep one's life and work in order | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Confidence | having faith in oneself | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Persuasiveness | ability to convince others | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Honesty | willingness to tell the truth, always | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Competitiveness | eagerness to win, to succeed | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Adaptability | ability to cope with new situations | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Understanding | ability to feel for others | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Discipline | self-control | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |
| Vision | ability to keep one's goals in mind, to focus | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 |

Total Score_____

*Exercise 28: Clarify your leadership style*[213]

*Create a "user manual" that documents your wants, needs, and approach as a leader in your organization. Try to address everything from which modes of communication you prefer to those things that drive you absolutely "nuts." Think of such a manual as a means for making your leadership more transparent in the organization.*

*What are my expectations?*

*E.g., what are my expectations for commitment to the job beyond regular work hours?*

*What are my values?*

[213] Ilan Mochari, "Help employees learn your leadership style by giving them a user's guide – to you." TheBuildNetwork.com.

*E.g., what do I value most from those with whom I work?*

*What are my strengths?*

*E.g., How will I help the staff get better at their jobs?*

*What are my weaknesses?*

*E.g., What weaknesses of mine should the rest of the organization know about, and how can they help me improve?*

*What are my idiosyncracies?*

*E.g., what are the individual quirks of mine that anyone working with me should know about?*

*What are my key processes?*

*E.g., What is my process for handling conflict?*

*E.g., When it comes to mistakes, what's the best way for others to come forward?*

# Chapter 8

## LEADERSHIP AND DEALING WITH CHANGE

*The chiefs of three villages each set out to build a bridge across a wide chasm. If they could build this bridge, the trade that came would enrich the lives of villagers for generations to come. The first chief told his workers, "Go forth and work. Do whatever is necessary to build that bridge." The villagers established a frenzied pace, for this chief abused those workers who did not follow his commands. The first chief boasted to the other two leaders about the speed of his construction. Unfortunately, because no one coordinated these worker's efforts, the bridge was a haphazard collection of nails and boards. It soon collapsed.*

*The second chief was watching this mess and decided to learn from the first chief's mistakes. She organized her workers into teams, and gave them a plan to build a bridge. At first, these workers had success, and built the bridge straight as an arrow far over the chasm. She boasted to the two other chiefs about the accomplishments of her workers. Unfortunately, the bridge only went so far, for the chief did not know how to build structural supports. Her workers became discouraged and abandoned their efforts.*

*The third chief was watching their efforts and decided to learn from the other chiefs' mistakes. He sent his workers to the other villages to learn what they had done, and what they hadn't done. His workers then developed a plan. In their first step, they did not build the bridge at all, but focused on creating the support columns they would need. When they completed this task, they rapidly finished the bridge.*[214]

Many organizations are like the first village in implementing organizational change. They start with vague directives with little clarity on what to do. Their successes are unpredictable and are likely to fail.

Other organizations are like the second village, and become victims of their own success. Their initial initiatives may be so successful they rapidly create more initiatives, without the qualitative organization-wide changes

[214] http://www.organizedchange.com/village.htm.

necessary to sustain a permanent effort. Some of these changes are obvious, in that organizations must facilitate, recognize, and encourage these initiatives. However, other qualitative changes also may be necessary. If these changes are not made, the organizational change movement risks running into the same troubles that faced by many organizations that try to adopt a new management "technique" without giving enough thought about the ramifications of their efforts.[215]

## The Reality of Change

*Change is inevitable; growth is intentional.*

If state and local government officials and nonprofit leaders today want to bring about meaningful and sustainable change, they will need to focus on the third approach in the previous story. Dealing effectively with change requires taking a collaborative approach within the organization. Progress and improvement always requires change. Change can occur for lots of different reasons, such as:

- the challenges of growth or decline that an organization is facing,
- changing global markets,
- changes in strategy,
- technological change,
- competitive processes including obtaining adequate funding,
- pressures to develop new clients and customers, or
- a changing economic environment.

The problem is not only how to acquire new concepts and skills, but also how to *unlearn* things that are no longer serving the organization well.

*Status quo, you know, that is Latin for the mess we're in.* Ronald Reagan

It seems that in the past an organization could experience change and then return to a period of relative stability. This provided breathing room for thoughtfully planning and getting ready for the next change. However,

[215] http://www.bizforum.org/Journal/www_journalDC001.htm.

research shows that now organizations are undergoing major change on average every three years, while smaller changes are occurring almost continually, and there are certainly no signs in the current economic climate that this will diminish.[216] All this change runs counter to our need to be comfortable and in a predictable environment. Our quest for "status quo" pushes us to seek the management of what is rather than seeking leadership for what could be. However, it is very difficult to make changes when an organization is satisfied with the status quo. It would seem that getting it going in any direction will make it easier to accommodate the necessary change to move it in the right direction.

*The only person who likes change is a baby with a wet diaper.* Mark Twain

Certainly, it would be difficult to find any thinking person who believes that change will not occur. Change, like "death and taxes," is inevitable. The important issue is for managers and leaders to cope with the barrage of changes that confront them daily as they attempt to keep their organizations adaptive, resilient, and viable.[217] The true leader must be able to embrace change and use it in ways that benefit the growth and sustainability of the organization.

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.* Mahatma Gandhi

## Leaders Role in Change Management

Leaders play a critical role during the organization's attempt to embrace change. It takes a leader to create positive change. Leadership is critical from the announcement of change through the implementing of the change. During the period in-between, the organization is the most unstable, often characterized by confusion, fear, loss of direction, reduced productivity, and lack of clarity about direction and expectations. It can be a period of high emotion, with employees grieving for what is lost, and initially unable to look to the future.[218]

[216] http://ezinearticles.com/?Change-Management---Coping-With-Change&id=1089209.
[217] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 192.
[218] http://www.work911.com/articles/leadchange.htm.

During this period, effective leaders need to focus on two things. First, the feelings and confusion of employees must be acknowledged and validated. Second, the leader must work with employees to begin creating a new vision of the altered workplace and help employees to understand the direction of the future. It is important to avoid focusing on feelings in this situation, but a strong focus on a new vision may result in the perception that the leader doesn't value the organization as it is. Therefore, an effective leader knows how to incorporate the reality of change into the organization's attempt to move successfully into the future.[219]

In the face of all this change, organizational leaders need to remind themselves that the human condition is all about being comfortable in a predictable life environment. Unfortunately, change is unpredictable and often uncomfortable. We as individuals and the organizations of which we are a part tend to keep doing those things we are familiar with, while at the same time hoping that our situation will improve significantly. In response to this confusion, many do nothing, often afraid of making the wrong choices.

> *Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.* Albert Einstein.

Certainly, successful leadership empowers its members to willingly accept the challenge of securing the future for themselves and for the organization and programs they represent. Leaders are at their best when they are calling on others to join them as they willingly face the adventure of confronting rapidly changing conditions.

## Organizational Change

In his book, Thriving on Chaos, Tom Peters states that *the most obvious benefit of unsettled times is the unique opportunity they afford to create rapid change. For those of vision, chaos can facilitate innovation.* Before starting a

[219] http://www.work911.com/articles/leadchange.htm.

program of organizational change, however, the organization needs to determine the answers to such questions as:

- What do we want to achieve with this change, why, and how will we know that the change has been achieved?
- Who is affected by this change, and how will they react to it?
- How much of this change can we achieve ourselves, and what parts of the change do we need help with?

> *Cause change and lead; accept change and survive; resist change and die.*
> Ray Noorda, technology pioneer and former president and CEO of Novell Corporation.

However, real and deep change in an organization is not likely to occur unless all of its members are committed to that change. No leader, no matter how strong, can "force" people to accept new ways of doing their work if they aren't believers in those ways. No successful change will occur if the staff doesn't trust the organization's leadership, doesn't share the organization's vision, doesn't buy into the reason for change, and isn't included in the planning. This will be true regardless of how brilliant the change strategy looks to be.

Embracing change does not necessarily mean moving against strong trends or realities. Terry Paulson, the author of *Paulson on Change*, quotes an uncle's advice: *It's easiest to ride a horse in the direction it is going*. In other words, don't struggle against change you can't control; learn to use it to your advantage.

> *God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*
> Reinhold Niebuhr.

Change is not a logical or intellectual process. It operates on various emotional and interpersonal dimensions that are essential to mastering change. It challenges long-held assumptions and encourages non-traditional thinking. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric

Company, succinctly summarized the six rules for successful leadership:

1. *Control your destiny, or someone else will*
2. *Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it were*
3. *Be candid with everyone*
4. *Don't manage, lead*
5. *Change before you have to*
6. *If you don't have a competitive edge, don't compete.*[220]

With any change, it is just as possible to experience significant reversals of achievement and loss of sustainability as it is to discover new opportunities for personal and professional success. It takes committed and knowledgeable leaders to help the organization gain the benefit of change and to get employees excited by the opportunities that change can bring. When change-adept l Inconsistencies between management's words and actions. Announcing the change is not the same as implementing it.eaders are asked to describe the images they associate with change, they acknowledge the stress, uncertainty, pressure, and disruption, but they also emphasize the benefits, such as the opportunity, growth, adventure, excitement, and challenge.[221]

Many reasons exist why organizational change fails. Among them are:

- Inconsistencies between management's words and actions. Announcing the change is not the same as implementing it.
- Not soliciting or addressing the organization's members concerns with change.
- Failing to involve those who are being asked to change in helping to plan that change. Change that is *done to* people usually makes them more resistant to it.
- Not communicating a compelling reason to change or a strong vision for the future of the organization if the needed change occurs.

[220] Noel M. Tichy and Stratford Sherman. *Control Your Destiny or Someone Else Will.* New York: Harperbusiness, 2005.
[221] Carol Kinsey Goman, Ph.D. "The Biggest Mistakes in Managing Change," #506 from *Innovative Leader* Volume 9, Number 12, December 2000.

- Unclear or overreaching expectations without a good measurement system for evaluating the change.
- Not changing the organizational systems to align with the change, such as training, compensation, information flow, or promotion.
- Management not realizing successful organizational change takes persistent efforts that may last years.
- Management blindly following a technique, which can be like trying to force a square peg into a round hole.
- Assuming training employees is the only change that they need to make.[222]

Another reason that introducing change into an organization poses problems is that an initial drop in performance typically occurs before it rises to a level above what it was previously.[223] This drop in performance can cause people to become discouraged initially and decide to abandon any attempt to embrace the needed change.

Before an organization begins to think about changing its procedures, practices, and mindsets, it is important to determine where it is with respect to the needed change. Ken Blanchard suggests the following questions to assess the situation:

- Is your organization on track to achieve its vision?
- Are your organization's initiatives delivering the outcomes desired by your Board and/or stakeholders?
- Is it delivering those outcomes on time and within budget?
- Is your organization maintaining high levels of productivity and morale?
- Are your customers excited about your organization?
- Is staff energized, committed, and passionate?[224]

[222] http://www.organizedchange.com/faq.htm. and Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level,* Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 195.
[223] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level,* Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 193.
[224] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level,* Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 194.

## Change Leadership vs. Change Management

Often one hears the term "change management" to describe the process of organizational change. However, there is a difference between "change management" and "change leadership" that's not just a matter of semantics. According to John Kotter, a leading management consultant, these terms are not interchangeable. The distinction between the two is actually quite significant. Change management, which is the term most often used, refers to a set of basic tools or structures intended to keep any change effort under control. The goal is often to minimize the distractions and impacts of the change.[225] Change management is a structured approach for ensuring that changes are thoroughly and smoothly implemented, and that the lasting benefits of change are achieved.

Change leadership, on the other hand, concerns the driving forces, visions, and processes that lead to the transformation of the organization. Change leadership is concerned with making the whole change process go faster, smarter, and more efficiently. Change management tends to be more associated—at least, when it works well—with smaller changes rather than a major transformation.[226]

Change leadership is also more about the urgency for getting everyone in the organization to want to make something happen. It is too easy to get comfortable with the status quo and to resist change. Frequently, a challenging vision can stimulate movement, especially if the people in the organization are empowered to move forward.

However, as good as change leadership can be in getting things moving, it also has the potential to get things a little bit out of control. It is impossible to ensure that everything happens in an expected or desired way at a time that is wanted. On the other hand, if leaders don't *constantly* drive change, their organization will lose its effectiveness and its support from its stakeholders and funders.

[225] http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2011/07/12/change-management-vs-change-leadership-whats-the-difference/.
[226] http://www.forbes.com/sites/johnkotter/2011/07/12/change-management-vs-change-leadership-whats-the-difference/.

Leaders and traditional managers tend to have different views of what change means. Traditional managers who are linked to the status quo frequently see change as a threat and as something that causes problems. Management usually aims at just maintaining consistency and order. Leaders, on the other hand, look forward to change as an opportunity to grow, to gain an advantage, and to attain excellence. For leaders, change brings something new, exciting, and challenging. In contrast to traditional management, leaders aim at movement and change, providing the opportunity to constantly reassess the organization and its goals and desired outcomes. If a person is not trying to improve the organization, he or she is not leading. A subsequent chapter in this book will focus on the differences between management and leadership, especially as it applies to local government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

When you consider the components of successful organizational change the qualities of a transformative leader become clear: [227]

- To begin with, successful change within an organization requires a clear and thorough understanding of what change truly means.
- It requires the capacity to generate and use power or influence in the change process.
- It requires the organizational leadership to provide the vision and support for the change efforts.
- It is critical for the leadership to set priorities about what change initiatives will allow the organization to achieve its vision most effectively and efficiently.
- It requires an effective process for getting from where the organization is today to where it ultimately wants to be.
- Organization leaders have the responsibility for assessing and measuring progress so that necessary modifications can be made to ensure successful change.

Far too often, the leaders of an organization may have been thinking for a while about the need for a particular change but fail to communicate this

[227] http://www.methodframeworks.com/blog/2010/change-agents-power-behind-effective-change-management/index.html.

need through an organization-wide dialogue. Instead, their energy is often spent crafting their message that announces the change. Very little effort may be made to involve all the members of the organization in understanding or agreeing with this need for change, how it will affect them personally and professionally, and how it will be implemented. The more that everyone is involved in looking at the options related to needed change and in suggesting ways to do things differently, the easier it will be to build the case for the next round of change.[228]

The staff of the organization does not have the initial responsibility to drive change in the organization. However, transformative change is not likely to occur if the staff is not on board to embracing this change. According to Ken Blanchard, the best way to initiate, implement, and sustain change is to increase the level of influence and involvement from the people being asked to change.[229] Leaders must listen to the employees; people need to feel that the approach to change will include their strong input and ongoing involvement. As this process enfolds, the change leaders will need to ensure that any employee concerns are brought forth and resolved along the way. Resistance increases the more that people sense that they cannot influence what is happening to them.

> *People who are left out of shaping change have a way of reminding us that they are really important.* Robert Lee

## Facilitating Change

Organization leaders need to recognize that people in the organization are likely to resist making major changes for a variety of reasons. These include fear of the unknown, a feeling of inadequacy to deal with the change, and whether the change will result in an adverse effect on their jobs. People need to feel that their concerns are being heard. As was stated earlier, leaders must widely communicate the need for the change and how the change can be accomplished successfully. Sustainable organizational

[228] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 206.
[229] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 217.

change happens through good communication and collaboration, not by actions of the top leadership.[230]

> *The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.* John Maynard Keynes.

It is also the responsibility of effective leaders to help people understand how this change will benefit each individual in the organization. Increasingly the leadership's role is to interpret, communicate, and enable rather to instruct and impose, which nobody really responds to well. Leaders can become cheerleaders, encouraging people to "stay the course" and continue to meet the challenges.

> *No one can persuade another to change. Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be opened from the inside. We cannot open the gate of another, either by argument or by emotional appeal.* Marilyn Ferguson.

The responsibility for *leading* change is with management and executives of the organization; they must direct the change in a way that employees can cope with it. The leadership of the organization has a responsibility to facilitate and enable change, and all that is implied within that statement, especially to understand the situation from an objective standpoint (to "step back", and be non-judgmental). Leaders also "direct" the change by committing resources to it, by setting up the structure and systems for its implementation, and by putting in place a means for measuring progress to meet the need for accountability.

American John P. Kotter is a Harvard Business School professor and leading thinker and author on organizational change management. Kotter's highly regarded books *Leading Change* (1995) and the follow-up *The Heart of Change* (2002) describe a helpful model for understanding and leading change. Each stage acknowledges a key principle identified by Kotter relating to people's response and approach to change, in which people see, feel and then change. His eight step change model can be summarized as:

[230] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 225.

1. *Increase urgency* - inspire people to move and to make the desired outcomes real and relevant.
2. *Build the guiding team* - get the right people in place with the right emotional commitment and the right mix of skills and responsibilities.
3. *Create a compelling vision* - get the team to establish a simple vision and strategy, focusing on those emotional and creative aspects necessary to drive quality service and efficiency.
4. *Communicate for buy-in* - Involve as many people as possible, communicate the essentials simply, and appeal and respond to people's needs. De-clutter communications - make technology work for you rather than against.
5. *Empower action* - Remove obstacles, enable constructive feedback and lots of support from leaders, and reward and recognize progress and achievements.
6. *Create short-term wins* - Set aims that are easy to achieve in bite-size chunks. the numbers of initiatives should be manageable. The current stages should be finished before starting new ones.
7. *Don't let up* - Foster and encourage determination and persistence to achieve ongoing change. Ongoing progress should be reported that highlights achieved and future milestones.
8. *Make change stick* - Reinforce the value of successful change via the recruitment and promotion of new change leaders. The desired change should be woven into the organization's culture.

For these reasons, an effective organizational communication strategy needs to be in sync with how the organization functions and the actions of its leadership. The leaders of government agencies and nonprofit organizations are beginning to learn the importance of role modeling that "walks the talk" as a requirement for leading change. Organizations send two concurrent sets of messages about change. One set of messages goes through formal channels of communications, such as speeches, newsletters, corporate videos, mission statements, and so forth. The other set of messages is "delivered" informally through a combination of casual remarks and daily activities. For today's skeptical employee audience,

rhetoric without action quickly disintegrates into empty slogans and company propaganda. In the words of Sue Swenson, former CEO of Cricket Communications, *what you do in the hallway is more powerful than anything you say in the meeting room*.

All of this discussion about change ultimately involves dealing with the culture of the organization. Culture can be defined as *the predominating attitudes, beliefs, and behavior patterns that characterize an organization's functioning.*[231] Unless the desired change is embedded in the organization's culture, it is not likely to be sustainable over time. If the desired change runs counter to the existing organizational culture, clearly that culture must be altered to support the new initiative. This usually requires revisiting the organization's mission, values, and vision and identifying which elements of these support the new culture and which don't.

If an organization hopes to become and remain excellent, its culture must be "rigorous," according to Jim Collins (*Good to Great*). This means that it must consistently apply exacting standards at all times throughout the organization, from top management down. An organizational culture that accepts mediocre performance cannot attain excellence. Therefore, change in the culture is often required to move from complacence to rigorous performance.

Without a doubt, organizations must continue to be relevant in order to be competitive. They must consistently be redefining their roles and activities by determining how to best accomplish their purpose. What leaders need from employees is the ability to commit to a course of action and, at the same time, to stay flexible enough to quickly alter behavior and attitude. As a result, this allows the organization the opportunity to help ensure its future success and contribution to its community.

It is worth noting that learning how to learn, learning how to innovate, and learning how to change are all closely related. The notion of "change" is arguably the most powerful because it focuses on results and implies proactive movement from one place to another. For example, if you ask

[231] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 238.

your employee, "What did you learn today?" it isn't asking the question, "What did you do differently afterward?", which should lead to the next question, "And what was the result?". Another insightful question is "What did you change today and what will you do differently tomorrow?" These questions imply continuous improvement. Imagine if each employee changed one thing every day. That's approximately 240 improvements per employee per year. What would that do for your organization?[232]

## The Board and Change

Since most nonprofit organizations are governed by a Board of Directors, and the Board serves as part of the leadership of the organization, it is important that this group be highly involved in the change process. The benefits of board involvement in initiating and sustaining change are the following:

1. The Board ensures that the project is fully resourced and shows political support. Board members have full authority for allocation of resources for the organization. Consequently, Board members can ensure that the project has all the necessary resources, including people, funding, and time. Their allocation of resources can show strong political support for change, which can sustain ongoing motivation and momentum for that change.
2. The Board oversees organizational planning. The Board has full authority over and supervises the Chief Executive Officer. Although employees (including the CEO) usually develop and implement many of the action plans to bring about meaningful change, the Board can ensure that those plans are fully developed and completely implemented.
3. Board members provide a wide range of useful expertise. Board members often have a wide range of useful skills that can aid in governing the organization, such as planning, leadership, management, supervision, and problem-solving. They may also have

[232] http://www.innovationexcellence.com/blog/2010/08/20/six-characteristics-of-highly-effective-change-leaders/.

technical knowledge of the organization's key functions or aspects of the economic development process. Those skills can be useful during a change initiative.

4. The Board provides time and energy to help implement plans for change. Employees are already overloaded. Giving them yet more work to do (during the change process) can completely overload them resulting in a failure to achieve desired results. This is likely to significantly damage the organization.
5. The Board can provide a more objective assessment on specific project issues and results than staff. Board members usually are not involved a great deal in the day-to-day activities of the organization. Consequently, they often retain an objective perspective on its activities and resulting changes. Their perspective can be useful when addressing issues in various projects and evaluating the quality of change in the organization and the results achieved.
6. Involvement of Board members is a powerful means to Board development. One of the best ways to get good Board members is to give them something meaningful to do. Of course, it is also true that one of the best ways to get rid of Board members is to give them something to do they aren't happy with. A particular organizational project can be a useful means to give Board members something productive to do – and, thus, develop the Board. [233]

Dr. Bill Berger, the past chairman of the president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology, stated*: I believe that the functions of leadership involve creating a purpose and sense of community, fostering commitment rather than compliance. Successful leadership inspires trust by integrating diverse views, supporting skillful conversations through dialogue, and helping others exert their influence. This sharing of leadership is accomplished by constantly facilitating, energizing, and sustaining others while encouraging achievable tasks, creating a proper perspective of history and hope, and leading to a collective vision for the future*.[234]

We should never forget the words of that great philosopher, Yogi Berra, who advised others that *you've got to be careful if you don't know where you're*

[233] http://managementhelp.org/misc/board-in-change.pdf.
[234] http://www.news-source.org/ACAAI/Archive/2003/acaaionline09-03-03.htm.

*going 'cause you might not get there*. Large-scale organizational change usually triggers emotional reactions, including denial, negativity, reluctant choice, tentative acceptance, or resistance to commitment. Leadership can either facilitate this emotional process or ignore it. Clearly, the latter course places the transformation effort at peril.[235]

More on this subject of managing change can be found in Chapter 6 of this author's book on *Managing for Excellence*, which is available by sending an email request to drkolzow@bellsouth.net.

> *Exercise 29: With your staff, choose one major socioeconomic change occurring in your community or region. Have a dialogue about that change to ensure that everyone is in agreement about the nature and significance of that change. Then have a dialogue about the implications of that particular change on the functioning and direction of your organization, and how the organization itself might have to change to deal more effectively with that external change.*

[235] Carol Kinsey Goman, Ph.D. "The Biggest Mistakes in Managing Change," #506 from Innovative Leader Volume 9, Number 12, December 2000.

# *Chapter 9*

# *THE VISIONARY LEADER*

## *Envisioning*

> *Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen despite the obstacles. John Kotter, from Leading Change.*
>
> *A leader is one who sees more than others see, who sees farther than others see, and who sees before others do.* Leroy Eims.

Some of the previous chapters described the character, behavior, competencies, and skills needed to be an effective leader. This chapter builds on all of that with an emphasis on the leader's ability to craft and articulate a vision. Regardless of the particular leadership traits or styles that a leader adopts or skills that are acquired, he/she must have vision. No one can be a leader without followers, and no one will follow someone unless it is clear where he or she is headed. That direction comes from a vision, which is an ideal and unique image of the future. It articulates a view of the future as the leader sees it, a future condition that would be better in some important ways than what now exists.

> *Whatever you can do, or dream you can . . . begin it; boldness has genius, power and magic in it.* Johan Wolfgang von Goethe.

As stated in a book by Kouzes and Posner: *Leaders are pioneers. They are people who venture into unexplored territory. They guide us to new and often unfamiliar destinations. People who take the lead are the foot soldiers in the campaigns for change. . . . The unique reason for having leaders – their differentiating function – is to move us forward. Leaders get us going someplace.*[236] Since most people don't take the time to think systematically about the future, those who do and act on their thinking have considerable power to shape the future.

[236] Kouzes, James M. & Posner, Barry Z. *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1987), p.32.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more, you are a leader.* John Quincy Adams.

Visions don't just somehow occur; dreams might, but significant visions don't. Visions come to those who have a well-informed and open mind, one which is prepared by a lifetime of learning and experience.[237] A leader doesn't have to predict the future in order to develop a vision. However, the more that someone is strongly aware of emerging trends and developments that impact a community and its organizations, the more likely that individual will have a reasonable understanding of the range and nature of possible future scenarios. Leaders have both the ability and responsibility to read trends and to look at what's happening at the current time, and then to discern not only where the organization has been but also where it is headed.[238] This puts the leader and his or her organization in a much better position to build flexibility and a quick response capability into what is envisioned for the organization.[239] As the noted author on leadership, John Maxwell, has stated, leaders *have vision for getting to their destination, they understand what it will take to get there, they know who they'll need on the team to be successful, and they recognize the obstacles long before they appear on the horizon.*[240]

Deciding what is worthwhile or desirable in a vision is also a function of the values of the leader. Core values go a long way in determining what really matters to an individual or to an organization. One's values influence the questions that are asked about the possible directions that should be pursued. They guide the choice of information being sought to answer these questions and how the information is evaluated. All of this guides the decision as to what vision to pursue among the various possibilities.[241]

[237] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 34.
[238] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 93..
[239] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 81.
[240] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 38.
[241] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 35.

> *Follow the fellow who follows a dream.* From the lyrics of "Look to the Rainbow" in Finian's Rainbow.

The leader's own belief in and enthusiasm for the vision is the source of inspiration for others. *Truly inspirational leadership is showing people how the vision can directly benefit them, how their specific needs can be satisfied.*[242] A vision generally is an attractive and desirable target, and must be clear to those who are the desired audience. However, if the vision is perceived as unattainable or beyond the perception of the "followers," it is unlikely to be embraced.

> *If people relate to the company they work for, if they form an emotional tie to it and buy into its dreams, they will pour their heart into making it better.* Howard Schultz, Starbucks founder.

To choose a direction for an organization, its leaders must first have developed a mental image of what they believe the future of the organization can and should be. This image or vision may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal. Good leaders constantly communicate a clearly articulated destination toward which the organization should aim. The leader's effective communication of the vision should clarify a future that in important ways is better, more successful, or more desirable for the organization than is the present situation.[243] The vision is a signpost pointing the way for all who need to understand what the organization is and where it intends to go.[244] It expresses what the leader and those who share the vision will be working hard to create.

> *There is no more powerful engine driving an organization toward excellence and long-range success than an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future, widely shared.* Burt Nanus, *Visionary Leadership.*

A vision activates, inspires, and transforms desire into action. As organizational learning expert Peter Senge has observed, v*ision translates*

[242] .Rowe, Alan J., et.al. *Strategic Management and Business Policy* (Menlo Park CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1985), p. 113.
[243]Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 8.
[244] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 9.

*mission into truly meaningful intended results – and guides the allocation of time, energy, and resources. In my experience, it is only through a compelling vision that a deep sense of purpose comes alive*.[245] It is up to the leaders to articulate and define those intended results into meaningful strategies that will transform the organization to meet future demands. When members of the organization see positive results and see goals being met, they get a clearer picture of what it means to fulfill the vision.

However, this transformation isn't likely unless the vision is appropriate for the organization and its situation. The vision can't ignore the history, culture, and values of the organization. Values and cultures can become so deeply rooted and persistent that they can actually constrain the transforming of the organization.

> *The best way to predict your future is create it.* Peter Drucker.

As was quoted in Chapter 8 on Change, Tom Peters, in his book, *Thriving on Chaos*, states that *the most obvious benefit of unsettled times is the unique opportunity they afford to create rapid change. For those of vision, chaos can facilitate innovation*. In a community, new or expanded visionary leadership often emerges from unsettled and chaotic conditions. Individuals with a positive attitude who are willing to embrace change and take some risks can help move the community in a desired direction. All of this is also true of the development organizations that serve the community. Without a clear vision, it is likely that an organization will founder.

> *Who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock.* Old proverb of Italian sailors.

Generally, the organization's staff receive their vision of the organization from their leadership (CEO and/or Board) since most have not articulated their own vision. This makes them receptive to vision "implants." However, leaders cannot establish their visions by edict, or through power or coercion. It is more an act of persuasion, of creating an enthusiastic and dedicated commitment to a vision because the leaders believe that it is

[245] Peter Senge, "The Practice of Innovation," *Leader to Leader*,9 (Summer 1998), pages 16-22.

right for the organization and for those it serves. Additionally, the leadership must also **live the vision**, demonstrating in their behavior the importance of this future state.

> *Leaders tell, but never teach, until they practice what they preach.* Featherstone.

Although leaders drive the vision, individuals within the organization also need to believe that they can make a difference in achieving organizational excellence. It is important that they believe that they can play a part in improving the organization in which they are working through their participation in its various activities. People need to find meaning in their work, and a clear vision defines that meaning.

Research indicates that leaders who demonstrate strong visionary leadership have the highest performing organizations.[246] A clear vision can lead to higher levels of productivity. With increased confidence and skill, the people doing the work recognize that they can actually accomplish more than they may have believed was possible.[247] Having a clear sense of direction is more likely to result in a more vigorous and enthusiastic involvement of every member of the organization, especially when they can see their personal role in achieving its vision. Because economic development planning in most organizations needs to have a relatively long-term focus and direction, a widely accepted vision also facilitates continuity of effort regardless of changing leadership and changing conditions.

It is becoming widely accepted that leadership is vitally needed throughout all levels of modern organizations.[248] If these leaders within the organization are to make the right decisions and implement the correct strategies, they certainly need to share the visions of those leaders to whom they report. However, within the context of these overriding organizational visions, a need exists for visioning at the staff and mid-management level as well. Creating effective teamwork and

[246] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010), p. 18.
[247] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 138.
[248] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 154.

empowerment of employees requires a common understanding of what is needed at their level in order for the organization to achieve the quality it seeks. Furthermore, one way to ensure that vision formation is a continuous process is by spreading the leadership role throughout the organization at every level, so that every operating unit is encouraged to develop its own vision.[249] This will be further discussed in Chapter 11.

One of the more important criteria for selecting leaders below the level of top management should be their ability to create and implement visions for their particular area of responsibility. Once an individual has been selected for a leadership position, his or her visioning skills can be enhanced with well-designed training and development programs. People can be put in positions where they observe other visionary leaders in action or where they are mentored by such individuals. These emerging leaders should be encouraged to develop and articulate visions appropriate to their level of operation. The experience gained from the ongoing efforts to envision will facilitate the development of these leaders and help them move into more responsible and higher-level positions. [250]

An organizational-wide vision is shared within the organization when everyone has a similar picture of what the organization is and where it is going, and they are committed to ensuring that it is truly shared. When people share a vision, they are connected and bound together by a common aspiration. Just as personal visions gain their power from an individual's deep caring for that vision, so shared visions derive their power from a common caring throughout the organization. [251]

A shared vision provides an overarching goal – a statement of what the ideal future looks like. This provides:

- A focus, purpose, and direction. Something the organization's members can strive to achieve, which leads to smarter choices in their decision-making.

[249] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 164.
[250] Bert Nanus. *Visionary Leadership.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992, p. 166.
[251] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York NY: Currency Doubleday) 1994, p. 206.

- An incentive to acquire and more effectively use assets and resources.
- Communication of the organization's goals.
- Participants that are clear on the direction needed to tackle important issues.
- The fostering of creativity by providing the opportunity to think collaboratively in innovative ways.[252]

A shared vision also should include common values and beliefs. Common values and beliefs are the fundamental principles that guide an organization. They provide a basis for action and communicate expectations for behaviors. They provide:

- Common expectation of how to treat one another.
- An opportunity to unite individuals with differing perspectives by focusing on their common beliefs and values.
- A supportive environment for working together collaboratively and creatively.
- Clarifying what is important.
- A framework for assuring an integration of the organization's culture, plans, and actions.[253]

A shared vision for an organization doesn't happen by accident. It requires a systematic process that involves the key stakeholders. This process has to engage them in a way that gets them thinking about the desired future for the organization on which they can all come to some level of agreement. A successful vision for an organization should never be the product of one individual, even if that individual is the executive director of the organization. The following exercise is one example of such a group visioning process that can be readily used within the organization.

*Exercise 30: Involve the Board in crafting a new vision for the organization. In a retreat or workshop environment, break the board into groups of five or six. Give them the following instructions:*

[252] http://www.naccho.org/topics/infrastructure/mapp/upload/visioning_full.pdf.
[253] http://www.nwcdc.coop/Resources/CSS/CSS03CreatingVision.pdf

*Put yourself five years into the future. Your hopes and expectations for the organization have been realized. Significant changes have occurred, but the best of the past has been retained. The organization is successfully serving the needs of its customers, clients, and constituents.*

*What is your vision for the future of this organization?*

- *What values are clearly evident in the organization that have led to its success?*
- *What impacts are major social and economic trends having or are likely to have on the nature of the organization and its activities?*
- *What role do you want this organization to play in the community in the future?*
- *What changes need to be made in how the organization is viewed by its customers, clients, and constituents?*
- *What new ventures does the organization need to undertake*?
- *What significant organizational issues need to be resolved?*
- *And so on!*

*Please describe in writing your opinion of what are the five most important characteristics of this organization five years from now*.

1._____

2._____

3._____

4._____

5._____

## FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE VISIONING EXERCISE

## (A Consensus-Building Process)

Each participant in the visioning exercise will be asked to write down on the sheet provided the five major components of their vision for the organization. This will be explained to them in the "full group" session. The participants will then be dismissed to their small groups or will begin working with their facilitator.

1. Ask each member of the small group to share, in turn, one of his/her characteristics of the organization ten years from now. Write this on the flipchart. Go around the group getting one characteristic from each member. If the component or characteristic is *similar* to one already stated, try to combine them. If it is *identical* to something already stated, ask for another component from the individual.

2. Repeat the process, asking for a second characteristic.

3. Repeat the process asking for a third characteristic

4. Ask if any additional characteristics need to be listed.

5. Go through the list with the group and consolidate those characteristics that are similar.

6. Start with the first characteristic and determine if there is group consensus on the inclusion of it within a vision statement for the organization. If not, move on to the second, the third, and so forth.

7. After you have determined those characteristics for which there is consensus, go back through the remaining to determine if consensus could be developed on any of those if minor changes or modifications could be made concerning the characteristic. Add those characteristics for which there is consensus to the list and eliminate those without consensus.

8. Working with the group, try to determine the priorities of the vision

components. Give each component either an "H" for high priority or very important, "M" for moderate priority, or "L" for low priority or not very important. If complete consensus does not exist in rating a particular component, give the appropriate rating that the majority of the group believes is correct.

9. Rewrite the high priority components on a flipsheet to bring it back to the group as a whole for discussion.

*The Executive Director of the organization should will take the results of the visioning exercise (i.e., the high priority components of the vision), and craft a vision statement within a week or two of the workshop. This should then be submitted to the Board or the Executive Committee of the Board for review, comment, and eventual adoption.*

The process of obtaining organizational input into the vision can include asking such questions as:

- Would you like to work for an organization that has this vision?
- Can you see where you fit in the vision?
- Does it help set priorities?
- Does it provide guidelines for making decisions?
- Are you enthused and excited about it?
- Is it complete?[254]

Once an initial draft of the vision is written, it should be marketed to the various stakeholders, funding sources, and the organization's constituents. The vision must be communicated in a compelling way, by translating it into operational steps that everyone can understand, especially those who have the responsibility of following it up with action. Responsible leaders know that not only must they change the culture of business-as-usual, they also must help people through the uncertainties of the change. It is likely that key stakeholders and others will need to be persuaded to change their perceptions about what is important for the future of the organization.

[254] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010), p. 28.

Additionally, leadership must consistently demonstrate how the vision applies to daily organizational life. If people are to achieve the level of trust necessary to accepting this vision, their leaders must "walk the talk." The executive leadership has to "roll up its sleeves" and get involved in making the vision happen. The job of the leader or leaders is also to support people in accomplishing the vision by removing barriers in the organizational system, including any that top management might be responsible for in its policies and practices.

However, only a "realistic" vision will enable the organization to focus its resources, support, and actions toward the achievement of desired goals. A compelling vision creates a strong organizational culture in which the energy of everyone in that organization is aligned. The creating of this culture through the focusing and defining of the leadership's vision is most effectively achieved through a systematic planning process. While the initial responsibility for creating an organizational vision rests with the CEO, Board, and possibly other key stakeholders, it is important that all the members of the organization have an opportunity to have input into that vision and to embrace it as their own.

Finally, it must be understood that the vision is not "written in stone." Visioning is an ongoing dynamic process if it is to be kept alive and meaningful. For example, when any organizational change is considered, it is always important to revisit the organization's vision to provide a rationale for the change. This vision needs to part of the fabric of the organization.

## Strategic Thinking

*If you can dream it, you can do it.* Walt Disney

A clear vision of the future is a key step for moving forward positively. Sustaining a new direction is the ultimate measure of success at the strategic leadership level.[255] This means that visions must be accompanied

[255] Bruce J. Aviolio, *Leadership Development in Balance: MADE/Born, Mahway NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers*, 2005, p. 188.

by strategic thinking and effective actions if they are to become reality. On the other hand, a strategy is only as good as the vision that guides it.

*Either control your own destiny, or someone else will.* Jack Welch.

Most people let old ideas influence current decisions. If leaders want to be effective and bring about organizational transformation, they generally have to change the way they think. True strategic thinkers continually assess current reality, interpret situations from many perspectives, and come up with better solutions consistently. Strategic thinking involves setting priorities and long-term goals that lead to desired results, rather than just being busy with activity. Leaders never reach a point where they no longer need to prioritize. This should become something they are always doing.

Because the economic and social environment keeps changing, adaptive strategic leaders are the ones who can thrive in that uncertainty. The skill sets discussed in previous chapters build that needed adaptability.

Clearly, strategic leadership is more than sitting around and visioning the future. The best leaders get the organization to focus and to become involved primarily in what matters the most to the customers the organization serves. So that the organization's strategies succeed, the leadership must anticipate, create, and guide change, and also create commitment in the organization's members. Unrealistic ideas about the organization's mission and future would only lead to dissatisfaction and unrealized expectations

Furthermore, the level of activity of the leadership and the organization doesn't equate with productivity. Being busy doesn't necessarily translate to accomplishment. Setting priorities and thinking strategically about those priorities requires effective leaders to try to anticipate important change and to see how that change will relate to the organization's vision. It has been said that if one focuses his or her attention on the activities that rank in the top 20 in importance, there will be an 80 percent return of the effort. The greatest success for the organization comes only when everyone is focused on what really matters.

For this reason, leaders must ask themselves if what they are doing is

necessary and important. If not, perhaps they shouldn't be doing it. And, if it is something that is necessary but not required of the leader, perhaps it should be delegated.

# Chapter 10

## THE LEADER AS ENABLER

*A mother wished to encourage her small girl's interest in the piano and so took her a local concert featuring an excellent pianist. In the entrance foyer the mother met an old friend and the two stopped to talk. The little girl wanted to see inside the hall and so wandered off, unnoticed by her mother. The girl's mother became concerned when she entered the hall and could see no sign of her daughter. Staff were notified and an announcement was made asking the audience to look out for the little lost girl. With the concert due to start, the little girl had still not been found. In preparation for the pianist's entrance, the curtains drew aside, to reveal the little girl sitting at the great piano, focused in concentration, quietly picking out the notes of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'.*

*The audience's amusement turned to curiosity when the pianist entered the stage, walked up to the little girl, and said "Keep playing."*

*The pianist sat down beside her, listened for a few seconds, and whispered some more words of encouragement. He then began quietly to play a bass accompaniment, and then a few bars later reached around the little girl to add more accompaniment. At the end of the impromptu performance the audience applauded loudly as the pianist took the little girl back to her seat to be reunited with her mother. The experience was inspirational for everyone, not least the small girl.*[256]

The moral of this story is that a little encouragement can go a long way. The enabling leader in the organization approaches the staff with a mindset of coaching them in an encouraging manner rather than stifling their initiative or dominating their performance.

> *The real leader has no need to lead--he is content to point the way.* Henry Miller.

The world is certainly becoming more interdependent as we deal with more and more complexity in our societies, our economies, our institutions, and our organizations. As a result, leadership is more likely to be created

[256] Alan Chapman/Businessballs [2011].

through relationships with others than through individual endeavors. Cooperation, facilitation, and collaboration have taken on more importance.

## Empowerment

> *The job of a leader is to build a complementary team, where every strength is made effective and each weakness is made irrelevant.* Stephen Covey.

Employee empowerment has become a cliché in many organizations. The truth of the matter is that many leaders don't want to share responsibility with others because they don't want to lose any of their power. One of the most difficult tasks that new supervisors face is "giving up" control when faced with a critical task. Leaders who are competent **enablers** learn to think beyond their own interests for the good of the group they are leading. Unfortunately, many leaders still do not see the direct benefits in such behavior.[257]

It is also clear that organizations cannot simply declare people to be empowered, and leaders cannot empower people to be innovative or willing to take risks or to choose courses of action that they are uncomfortable with. In that respect, individuals have to empower themselves, because organizational change begins with self-change.

> *The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it.* President Theodore Roosevelt.

An empowered staff is one that is committed to the work of the organization. Workers enjoy a sense of competency and feel that they are learning and improving. They are making decisions that most directly affect them. A feeling of community and of personal significance exists, and they find meaning in what they are doing. Clearly, if the leadership of

[257] Bruce J. Aviolio, *Leadership Development in Balance: MADE/Born, Mahway NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers*, 2005, p. 62.

the organization brings out the best in its people, it is bringing out the best in the organization.

Enabling leaders know they can't achieve organizational excellence on their own. They learn that when they share leadership in the organization, it improves their own capacity to lead. Time can be freed up to do more important things, such as strategic thinking, envisioning, and creating innovative solutions to ongoing problems. The sharing of leadership enables the empowering of others by fostering collaboration, promoting cooperative goals, and building trust in their relationships. Leaders encourage their employee's to use the word "we" rather than "I".

> *Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful*. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.
>
> *The test of your leadership is not what happens when you are there, but what happens when you're not there.* Ken Blanchard.

The fact is that effective and productive leaders see their greatest successes through the successes of their employees. Empowerment means letting people bring their knowledge and experience to work, and fostering their motivation to use it on organizational tasks. It also means encouraging them, giving them power, and helping them to succeed. Only empowered people can reach their potential.[258] The main ingredient for empowering others as a leader is a strong belief in people, which helps them become more confident in themselves.[259]

Being willing to invest time and resources into the development of staff leadership requires unselfish leadership and a high level of skill at the top. Empowerment encourages people to grow professionally, which can foster innovation and change. Change is the price of progress, and, as was stated in a previous chapter, change makes people uncomfortable. For some leaders, this uncomfortable feeling is a barrier to their following through with leadership development within the organization.

[258] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 146.
[259] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 150.

*The leader is the servant who removes the obstacles that prevent people from doing their jobs.* Max Depree, a leadership expert and author.

Clearly, a supervisor in pursuit of empowerment cannot simply delegate tasks without providing guided leadership. Employee empowerment and leadership development involves an ongoing effort to balance freedom of activity with appropriate levels of accountability. This balance is not easily achieved. People must be put in a position to be successful and should be provided with the necessary training and resources to obtain positive outcomes. Ongoing learning is an integral part of an empowered and high performing organization. When employees are enabled properly, supervisors grow into leaders and employees begin to achieve results that were previously thought to be unattainable.

In a culture of empowerment, top leadership continues to make strategic decisions. However, employees should get involved in making operational decisions as they become more comfortable assuming the risks associated with those decisions. Generally, people at lower and lower staff levels are making more and more important decisions. Technology advances are promoting this decision-making reality. As staff gradually begin to assume responsibility for decisions and their consequences, managers must gradually pull back on their involvement in decision-making. This is a process of transformation of roles.[260]

In a transforming organization, leaders in an organization must work to develop people as quickly as possible to their full potential. This will lead to significant improvements in staff motivation and performance. Sharing information through good communication is a critical component of enabling members of the organization. Ineffective or nonexistent communication will result in mistrust, confusion, cynicism, and a decline in morale. This certainly erodes confidence in the leadership. It should be noted, however, that too much communication isn't much of an improvement over too little. Information overload leads to blocking out what is being received.

[260] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, p. 70.

## Figure 17: The Contrast between "Boss" Leadership and Enabler Leadership[261]

| "Boss" Leadership | Enabler Leadership |
|---|---|
| A leader's goal is to be served | A leader's goal is to help others grow |
| Interested primarily in the leader's image and advancement. Self-preservation and personal image is at the forefront of most decisions | Seeks to enable subordinates to advance to their fullest potential by downplaying self and praising others. The team or organization and all its members are considered and promoted before self. |
| Entitlement of the position is more important than its responsibilities. | Responsibilities are more important than the perks of positional entitlement. |
| Co-workers are seen and treated as inferiors and not usually invited to participate in decision-making or offered important information. | Co-workers are treated with respect as part of a team who work together to accomplish a task and make decisions with shared information. |
| Easily accessible to only closest allies. | Often seen interacting with others and maintains an open door atmosphere. |
| Creates an atmosphere of dependence using power of position to influence. | Creates an atmosphere in which others see their potential being encouraged and developed and power is used to help others grow. |
| Wants others to first listen to the leader. | Wants to listen to people before making a decision. |
| Seeks first to be understood rather than to understand. | Seeks first to understand, then be understood. |
| Condemns others for mistakes and reluctantly accepts responsibility as a sign of weakness. | Values individual workers and learns from mistakes while offering praise to others for taking risks. |
| Rejects constructive criticism and takes the credit for accomplishments. | Encourages input and feedback, and shares credit for the results. Process is as important as accomplishments. |
| Does not train others to function effectively. | Equips and invests in others with a view to their advancement. |
| Followership is based on personality. | Followership is based on character. |
| Expediency is the main criteria in making decisions in secret. | Principles are the main criteria for making openly arrived at decisions. |
| Uses intimidation to silence critics. Defensive in nature. | Welcomes open discussion on improvement. Openness to learning from anyone. |
| Wins support for ideas through deception, power plays, or manipulation. People respond out of fear. | Wins support for ideas through logic and persuasion. People respond out of respect and a sense of it being right. |
| Promote those who follow without questioning or are pliable. | Promote those who are contributing to the success of the organization. |
| Authority is based on external controls in the form of rules, restrictions, and regulations maintained by fear of punishment. | Authority is based on influence from within through encouragement, inspiration, motivation, and persuasion. |
| Accountable only to superiors. Shuns personal evaluations as interference. | Accountable to the entire organization. Welcomes personal evaluations as a means to improve performance. |
| Clings to power and position. | Is willing to step aside for someone more qualified. |

[261] Adapted from http://hci2010mmp.wiki.hci.edu.sg/file/view/Conceptual+Framework.pdf.

| | |
|---|---|
| Little interest in developing competent successors. | Leadership development is a high priority in helping others to grow. |

*Exercise 31: Enabling Leadership*

*To get your organization thinking about enabling one another, ask these questions of yourself and have staff answer these same questions about you and about themselves:*

- *Do you develop cooperative relationships among people you work with?*
- *Do you actively listen to diverse points of view?*
- *Do you treat others with dignity and respect?*
- *Do you support decisions that people make on their own?*
- *Do you give people freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work?*
- *Do you ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves?*

*If the answer is "no" to any of these, take the opportunity to have open discussions about possibilities for improvement. Have a dialogue on leadership from above and the development of enabling leadership within the organization's staff.*

## Coaching

*Coaches treat people not as they are, but as they can be.* Tom Hornsby and Larry Warkoczeksi in *New Roles for Leaders,*

The move toward increased employee empowerment and improved performance has made clear the role of leadership. When organizational leaders act as "coaches" they can foster an environment that encourages and supports this desired state. Coaching is a way of encouraging or supporting others to achieve a goal, to improve performance, to acquire new competencies and skills, or to gain new responsibilities. In a recent Right Management survey of North American human resource profes-

sionals, 81 percent of respondents indicated that coaching does indeed improve the effectiveness of leaders.[262] Ken Blanchard, a noted expert on leadership coaching, has stated that *leaders who utilize coaching skills have more effective teams, higher morale, and better bottom-line results than those who don't.*[263]

The leader coach generally is much more effective in his/her leadership role in the organization, especially as the organization works toward improved internal involvement. It is the opposite of the "command and control" type of management. The purpose of coaching is to help each employee grow in his/her capabilities, ownership of assignments, responsibility, authority, and purpose to improve the organization's quality of work.[264] Employee empowerment as part of a highly functioning "team" is the goal of effective coaching.

> *Leadership is accepting people where they are, then taking them somewhere.*
> C. W. Perry, Quaker leader.

Some people are fortunate enough to get formal training in coaching. However, many leaders have to develop this important competency themselves. This begins with one's self-awareness as an effective leader. You have to be aware of who you are, how you are perceived by others, what your own strengths and weaknesses are, and learn and develop yourself before you can begin to help others do the same. You must be a model of what you want to see in others. This issue of self-awareness and self-assessment was dealt with in Chapter 5.

The second stage of developing as a leader coach involves creating your own development plan to take advantage of your strengths and work on any weaknesses. Once you have a personal development plan, you are in a position to begin working with your team members to develop similar plans with them.

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[262] Leader Coaching: A New Model to Accelerate Performance. http://www.right.com/thought-leadership/research/leader-coaching-a-new-model-to-accelerate-performance.pdf.
[263] The Ken Blanchard Companies, "Coaching Essentials for Leaders," http://www.coaching.com/public/Coaching_Products/Coaching_Skills_Training/.
[264] Tom Hornsby & Larry Warkoczeksi, *New Roles for Leaders.* Franklin TN: Hillsboro Press, 2000, p. 45.

Coaching can be facilitated through the strategic planning process, with each individual that is being coached preparing a personal strategic plan that is nested within the strategic plan for the organization. For coaching to be effective, it requires identifying and understanding the capabilities and competencies of each employee, and tying these to their personal and career aspirations. Leader coaches help employees to establish long-term development goals and help them conceptualize a plan for attaining them. They make agreements with their employees about their role and responsibilities in enacting their development plans, and they give the instruction and feedback necessary to foster success. Although this sounds rather simple, the trick is to actually follow through in the middle of the day-to-day hectic activity that is typical of what most organizational leaders experience.[265]

Another plus to coaching is that it helps people to know what is expected of them and how their work fits into the organizational vision, mission, and its strategies. Building the capability of employees consistent with the organization's mission and vision fosters continued organizational success as employees are more clear on and committed to their particular areas of responsibility. This commitment is a result of coaching's implicit message, which is, "I believe in you, I'm investing in you, and I expect your best efforts." Employees very often rise to that challenge.[266]

Coaching leaders are by definition good at delegating; they give employees challenging assignments, even if that means the tasks might not be accomplished quickly. In other words, these leaders are willing to put up with short-term failure if it furthers long-term learning.[267]

Ken Blanchard has identified five different types of coaching in the organization: [268]

- **Performance coaching** – used when individuals need help returning their performance to acceptable standards. This is

[265] Susan Wright, "The Leader as Coach," http://www.banffcentre.ca/leadership/library/pdf/coach_22-24.pdf.
[266] Daniel Goleman: http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130821093435-117825785-don-t-write-off-the-coaching-leadership-style.
[267] Daniel Goleman: http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130821093435-117825785-don-t-write-off-the-coaching-leadership-style.
[268] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level*, Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, pp. 150-163.

usually a result from a negative change in attitude rather than a problem with their skills.

- **Development coaching** – used when high performing individuals are ready to expand their capacity and capabilities in their current role. This is important for building future leadership in the organization.
- **Career coaching** – used when individuals are ready to plan their next career moves. This is an important strategy for retaining organizational talent; people become more energized to keep developing when thinking and talking about their future. One of the primary reasons that top performers leave an organization is because nobody asked them to stay.[269]
- **Coaching to support learning** – occurs when management supports, encourages, and reinforces recent training and fosters turning what has been learned into action. People learn through training, and training is one of the best ways to develop people in your organization. This topic was covered in more detail in an earlier chapter.
- **Creating an internal coaching culture** – happens when leaders recognize the value of coaching and use it to develop others. Not only does coaching emphasize leadership development, but it also fosters a mindset of taking ownership and responsibility for work that is done. A coaching culture is a culture of self-responsibility rather than blaming or pointing to others when problems arise. Taking on the role of self-responsibility generally leads to a more productive and positive work environment.

The leader as coach must also, however, be aware of when to enable and when to "back off" and let someone work something out on their own. This is illustrated in the following story written anonymously:

> *A man found a cocoon for a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through the little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared stuck.*

[269] Marshall Goldsmith, "Retain Your Top Performers," www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com/cim/articles_display.php?aid=162.

*The man decided to help the butterfly and with a pair of scissors he cut open the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. Something was strange. The butterfly had a swollen body and shriveled wings. The man watched the butterfly expecting it to take on its correct proportions. But nothing changed.*

*The butterfly stayed the same. It was never able to fly. In his kindness and haste the man did not realize that the butterfly's struggle to get through the small opening of the cocoon is nature's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight.*

*Like the sapling which grows strong from being buffeted by the wind, in life we all need to struggle sometimes to make us strong.*

The coaching style works well in many organizational situations, but it is perhaps most effective when people on the receiving end are "up for it." For instance, the coaching style works particularly well when employees are already aware of their weaknesses and would like to improve their performance. Similarly, the style works well when employees realize how cultivating new abilities can help them advance.[270]

By contrast, the coaching style makes little sense when employees, for whatever reason, are resistant to learning or changing their ways. Also, it doesn't work if the leader lacks the expertise to help the employee along. The fact is, many managers are unfamiliar with or simply inept at coaching, particularly when it comes to giving ongoing performance feedback that motivates rather than creates fear or apathy.[271]

As important as coaching is to the organization and its employees, very few people have received training in how to be an effective coach. Not surprising, the coaching style of leadership is often overlooked because of its demand of time and talent. However, those who engage in it find that after a first session, it takes little or no extra time. Leaders who ignore this

[270] Daniel Goleman: http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130821093435-117825785-don-t-write-off-the-coaching-leadership-style.
[271] Daniel Goleman: http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130821093435-117825785-don-t-write-off-the-coaching-leadership-style.

style are passing up a powerful tool: its impact on organizational performance has been consistently positive.[272]

*Exercise 32: Your Greatest Coaches or Mentors*

*Take time with your staff or with your Board members to have them identify the most effective coaches and mentors in their life or work.*

*Talk about what made their style and character attractive.*

*How did they influence you?*

*What difference do you think it has made to your life?*

## Collaboration

> *Leaders foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful*. Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner.

The concept of "collaboration" is often discussed as an important aspect of empowerment and enabling. Unfortunately, what passes for a collaborative effort is often less than what is desired. Collaboration is more accurately defined as *a mutually beneficial relationship between two or more parties who work toward common goals by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability for achieving results.*[273] It is certainly more than getting connected with people (communication), or having beneficial relationships (cooperation and coordination). The purpose of collaboration is to create a shared vision, agree on a common set of goals, and develop a common set of strategies that solve an organizational problem or that advance the achievements of the organization. Clearly, at the heart of collaboration is a

[272] Daniel Goleman: http://www.linkedin.com/today/post/article/20130821093435-117825785-don-t-write-off-the-coaching-leadership-style.
[273] David D. Chrislip, and Carl E.Larson, , *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994, p. 5.

trusting relationship among the parties involved and an effective process for working together.

> *Gettin' good players is easy. Gettin' 'em to play together is the hard part.* Casey Stengel.

Working together collaboratively is not easy. It's been often stated that "collaboration is not a natural act." People tend to focus on their own needs rather than practicing the complex art of balancing their needs with those of others. Simply put, our *collaboration* skills have been impaired by centuries of focusing on competition and individualism.[274] As a result, as many of us pursue our own needs and wants, we find ourselves engaged in increased conflict in our lives. In the context of a group, this means more challenge in navigating group decision-making and the flow of effective communication.

Conflict is a natural part of being human and engaging with others, but it doesn't have to lead to major problems. Conflict resolution and negotiation was discussed in Chapter 7. It takes skill, diplomacy, and real leadership to move from conflict to collaboration.

Furthermore, collaboration generally is not an ongoing state of activity within a team or organization, but is usually focused around a particular problem or set of issues. It must have a purpose with no predetermined outcomes in order to be sustainable. The advantage of involving a group of people is that they bring different experiences, knowledge, and perspectives, which is more likely to lead to more creative and better decisions.

People and process will always be more important than tasks and organizational structure in accomplishing goals and a higher level of productivity. The *process* of collaboration is obviously important to its success. What is needed is a credible and open collaborative process that ensures to participants that their views will be heard and considered, and that the issue hasn't already been decided. A constructive process takes

[274]Mike Kashtan, "Leadership, Empowerment, and Interdependence," *Acquired Spontaneity,* April 19, 2012.

the time to build trust, to develop the skills for working together as a team, and to ensure an understanding of the issues being focused upon. The process seeks consensus. The role of leadership, even in a collaborative environment, is to serve as a catalyst to create, initiate, and nurture this process.

However, effective systems and processes only become so if the people who make them work are effective. Highly motivated, empowered, and well-trained members of the team or organization provide the only assurance that it will be effective in accomplishing its goals.[275] In addition, successful collaborative initiatives depend on ensuring that the participants, no matter how motivated or empowered, understand the purpose and context of their working together.

*If you don't agree on the problem, you won't agree on the solution.*

In a collaborative organizational culture, people are individuals who are continually shifting their collaborations with others as needed to make performance and change happen. In those collaborations, individuals continuously both follow and lead one another in whatever combination works best for the task at hand. In effect, the particular group involved in a collaborative effort consists of "stakeholders" who are impacted by the particular problem or issue being considered or have a vested interest in its solution. It is these stakeholders who need be involved in defining problems and solutions, because it will be their work that will lead to action.[276] It is therefore important to ensure that the appropriate stakeholders (not to be confused with organizational stakeholders, such as Board members or funders) are at the collaborative "table."

Those engaged in an active collaboration need access to reliable and relevant information in order to make good decisions. In a collaborative environment, they do not need someone to tell them what to do. Ideally, they must take the time to understand their own perceptions and experiences as related to the issue, as well as to learn what others have

[275] http://hci2010mmp.wiki.hci.edu.sg/file/view/Conceptual+Framework.pdf.
[276] Douglas K. Smith, "The Following Part of Leading," Frances Hesselbein, et.al.editors. *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. p.207.

discovered and how other organizations have dealt with similar issues. Collaborative activities use expert information and advice to inform the process, but not to drive it.[277]

Leaders are often thought of as those who articulate a vision, inspire people to act, and focus on important problems and results. The collaborative approach requires a different kind of leadership. It needs leaders who can nurture the process, facilitate interaction, and patiently deal with high levels of frustration.[278] Collaboration is not likely to be sustained without facilitative leaders.

In summary, an organization's employees are enabled by:

1. Fostering collaboration and mutual trust by promoting shared goals.
2. Sharing power and information. Providing staff with more complete information communicates trust and a sense of "we're in this together." By having access to information that helps them understand the big picture, people can better appreciate how their contribution fits in and how their behavior impacts other aspects of the organization.[279]
3. Creating a work climate that encourages employees to *own their own job.*
4. Promoting the taking of risks to bring about innovation and creativity.

[277] David D. Chrislip, *Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2002, p.51.
[278] David D. Chrislip, and Carl E.Larson, , *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1994, p. 97.
[279] Ken Blanchard, *Leading at a Higher Level,* Upper Saddle River NJ: FT Press, 2010, p. 64.

# Chapter 11

# BUILDING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

## Levels of Leadership within the Organization

In the traditional models of organizational leadership, power typically is found in the designated leader. This still is very much in evidence in many organizations, perhaps even the majority of them, even with all of the discussion about transformational and enabling leadership. Employees often state that it never occurred to them to try to attempt to take a more active role in shaping the outcome of a decision or an event, especially when they experienced a negative reaction from top management. They implicitly assume that they have no power and no "right" to power. When management makes a request from a position of power, many hear it as a demand. As a result, the typical response can be one of resentfully submitting or defiantly rebelling.[280]

It would appear that this traditional model of leadership is going the way of the "horse and buggy." If the modern organization is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, then it becomes important that all its employees are knowledge workers rather than people merely receiving orders and implementing them. In this context, each employee has a specific set of skills and expertise, all of which are subject to continual change and upgrading. In addition, each tends to use powerful technologies that give them access to a depth and range of information that was formerly restricted to top management. This organizational sophistication minimizes the distinctions between those who make decisions and those who carry them out, and between those who conceive of tasks and those who execute them. As operational employees take on increasing responsibility for making decisions regarding their work and the outcomes of their work, the identity and reputation of the organization is placed into the hands of all its members rather than of a strategic one or

[280] Mike Kashtan, "Leadership, Empowerment, and Interdependence," *Acquired Spontaneity*, April 19, 2012.

several at the top.[281] Power is therefore found at every level in today's organizations.[282]

The reality of this distribution of power and leadership throughout the effective organization of today and tomorrow forces a change of thinking about just who is a leader. Top-down leaders that withhold power from those below them in the organization deprive them of the ability to use the expertise, experience, and information they have obtained. This is particularly destructive in responding directly and quickly to customer concerns and requests.[283] Furthermore, top-down leadership (hierarchical authority) tends to result in compliance, not in stronger commitment. *The more strongly hierarchical power is wielded, the more compliance results*, according to Peter Senge.[284] If the strategy of the organization is to be more excellent and more effective, people at all levels and doing all kinds of work need to be participants in the evolution of that strategy. Leadership becomes a "shared process" in that scenario. The focus of the organization needs to be on growing its leaders at all levels.

> *The very highest leader is barely known by men. Then comes the leader they know and love. Then the leader they fear. Then the leader they despise. When actions are performed without unnecessary speech the people say, "We did it ourselves."* Lao Tsu

Jim Collins, in his book *Good to Great*, makes the case that most larger organizations are comprised of five levels of leaders:[285]

1. **Level 1 -- Highly Capable Individual**: Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills, and good work habits.
2. **Level 2 -- Contributing Team Member:** Contributes individual capabilities to the group objective, and works well in a group setting.

[281] Wilfred H. Drath "Approaching the Future of Leadership Development." Cynthia D. McCauley, et.al. editors. *The Center for Creative Leadership: Handbook of Leadership Development.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998, p. 412.
[282] Sally Helgesen, "Leading from the Grass Roots," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 21.
[283] Sally Helgesen, "Leading from the Grass Roots," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 22.
[284] Peter M. Senge, "Leading Learning Organizations," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p. 43.
[285] Jim Collins, *Good to Great,* New York: Harperbusiness, 2001.

3. **Level 3 -- Competent Manager:** Organizes people and resources toward efficient and effective pursuit of desired outcomes.
4. **Level 4 -- Effective Leader:** Catalyst for vigorous pursuit of vision, and stimulates higher performance standards.
5. **Level 5 -- Executive:** This highest level of management in an organization builds enduring greatness through an unusual blend of personal humility and professional will. Their resolve is to do whatever is needed to make the organization "great."

*Great vision without great people is irrelevant.* Jim Collins

Levels 1 through 4 of Jim Collins' hierarchy of leadership are found in every organization that is more than one person. Project managers, for example, fall into one or another of these levels. They often find, however, that they are held responsible and accountable for the outcome of their work, but may have very limited authority. That does not mean that they cannot find an opportunity for being a leader. As employees acquire increased leadership competencies and skills, they can gain recognition as leaders from the top leadership and stakeholders. This can lead to being listened to by top leadership for their advice, which can translate to gaining more authority and input as a lower level leader in the organization.[286]

This need for leadership throughout the organization becomes increasingly important as organizations become larger and more complex. In larger organizations, top leadership is less able to accomplish everything that is needed of and expected from the organization. Instead, top leadership needs to focus on communicating an inspiring vision and clarifying core values, and on demonstrating real care for the members of the organization. The idea is to foster the feeling among staff and stakeholders of being part of a community within the organization. If the members of the organization feel that they are part of this community and are cared for and about, it will be more likely that they will seek opportunities to assume leadership roles. Therefore, the role of leadership in top management is to create a community environment of trust in which many leaders can emerge.

[286] Jack Ferraro, "Self-Directed Leadership Development – Moving Beyond the PMP," http://www.compaid.com/caiinternet/ezine/ferraro-sdl.pdf.

When new leaders are developed in the organization, they tend to become better at what they do. They also help everyone who works with them to do the same. Expanding the leadership of the organization gives it the ability to expand its responsibilities and take on new initiatives.[287] In this "enlightened" environment, top management provides support, but avoids micromanaging these emerging leaders.

It cannot be expected that all real leaders will become "great" leaders. "Greatness," as Jim Collins defines it, happens through a leadership approach that transcends one's self.[288] This is what he calls Level 5 Leadership. In his book *Good to Great*, Collins describes a Level 5 leader as one who builds enduring greatness through the use of personal humility and professional will to mentor others to do the right thing, one who takes responsibility for failures while giving credit to others for their success, and one who relies on inspired standards to motivate others. Level 5 leaders are results-oriented, they do not tolerate mediocrity, and they possess a high level of motivation for achieving organizational excellence. Their unwavering resolve and ability to channel ambition into the organization and not themselves is paramount. This type of leader sets up both the organization and his/her successors for success.

Collins further states that level 5 leadership is one of the key determinants of organizational greatness and excellence. The essence of "great" leadership is effective management of oneself and others in response to a variety of situations.[289] However, less concern is shown for self and more concern is demonstrated for the team or organization.

> *A Good to Great Leader is an ordinary person quietly working and producing extraordinary results.* Jim Collins

Unfortunately, most larger organizations do not have leaders who reach Level 5. This inhibits the ability of these organizations to facilitate the growth of leadership throughout the organization. Failure to grow internal leaders will only result in lower levels of productivity, innovation, and customer service. For those reasons, top leadership needs to give their

[287] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011, p. 186.
[288] Jim C. Collins, *Good to Great*, New York: Harperbusiness, 2001.
[289] Jim C. Collins. *Good to Great*. New York, NY: HarperCollins; 2001: pp.17–40.

employees the appropriate training, provide learning opportunities, and create an environment that fosters their development.

*Exercise 33: Individually complete the following chart, indicating the ways that your work environment supports the expression of leadership on an ongoing basis, and the ways it discourages the development of new leadership.*[290]

**Ways My Organization Supports Expressions of Leadership:**

**1.**_____

**2.**_____

**3.**_____

**4.**_____

**5.**_____

**Ways My Organization Obstructs Leadership Development:**

**1.**_____

**2.**_____

**3.**_____

**4.**_____

**5.**_____

*As a group within the organization, discuss the results of this analysis, and the impact this has had on the quality of the organization.*

[290] Warren Bennis and Joan Goldsmith,. *Learning to Lead: A Workbook on Becoming a Leader.* Reading MA: Perseus Books, 1997, p. 66.

*Exercise 34: Create an autobiography of your leadership development experience. In each previous 5-year period of your life, write down what you believe to be the highlights of your leadership development, the impact you have had on the development of others, or both.*

*Now look out over the next three to five years, and write down specific accomplishments you would like to achieve in terms of your development as a leader or the leadership development of those around you.*[291]

## Who Are the Organization's Potential Leaders?

> *The bottom line in leadership isn't how far we advance ourselves, but how far we advance others.* John Maxwell.

Organizational leadership is a complex issue, as previous chapters of this book have hopefully demonstrated. Leadership in nonprofits is provided by stakeholders, by Board members, by senior management, and by staff working on their assignments. In government agencies, state and local government is headed by a governor or mayor, with important leadership often provided by county commissioners, city councilmen, or legislators. Senior management takes its lead from these leaders, translating their vision into the leading and managing of their area of governmental responsibility. Mid-management further pursues that vision, managing and leading their department and staff. Finally, staff has the responsibility for leading and managing in their areas of responsibility.

All nonprofit and government organizations have to deal with their leadership "pipeline." Where will the needed leaders come from in the future to ensure the sustainability of the programs. Many organizations and agencies initially focused on the talent supply for senior management positions. Their earliest efforts were aimed at grooming or hiring people

[291] Bruce J. Aviolio, *Leadership Development in Balance: MADE/Born, Mahway NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers*, 2005, p. 79.

for top management. However, these efforts are changing and expanding for a variety of reasons:

- The need to ensure the availability of effective leaders to take the place of those who will be leaving;
- Employee demand for developing new skills that will enable them to retain their jobs or move into new positions; and,
- Emerging understanding of leadership as a set of behaviors, competencies, and skills that employees at all levels are expected to develop and demonstrate.

Unfortunately, leadership development in an organization has tended to focus on a narrow segment of the workforce, such as middle-managers who are in line to be promoted, high-potential recruits to the organization, or new top management. As a result, the leadership pipeline is short and relatively narrow, since it has been built for limited capacity.[292] In this scenario, leaders are developed as they are needed, right before they move into leadership positions or soon afterward.

Given the rapid escalation in the complexity of demands on nonprofit and government organizations, this "build it when you need it" approach no longer works. Certainly, the pressure on training budgets has made it difficult to allocate funds for longer-term leadership development programs. However, it has become increasingly difficult to find the talent to replace aging or departing leaders in a typical organization. The demands on senior management time often results in less time being spent in developing potential leaders.

Furthermore, many agencies and organizations in recent years have increased their outsourcing of various functions and activities, which has resulted in a hollowing-out of the middle management tier that has shrunk the potential succession pool. It also reduces the organization's internal store of knowledge and expertise that can be passed down to younger workers.[293]

[292] Dr. Mary B. Young, *Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State, and Federal Government*, CPS Human Resources, 2005.
[293] Dr. Mary B. Young, *Building the Leadership Pipeline in Local, State, and Federal Government*, CPS Human Resources, 2005.

Generally, successful and sustainable leadership development programs within an organization require identifying those who have the potential for increased leader responsibility. This includes both those individuals who are highly visible as well as those less obvious. It also involves assessing who among these leaders may resist collaborative efforts, how strongly, and why. Finally, it includes developing working relationships with these individuals to facilitate their development.[294] Max De Pree, author of *Leadership Is an Art*, declared that *succession is one of the key responsibilities of leadership.*[295]

Building leadership capacity in the organization should begin with attracting and recruiting people that have leadership potential. This is not a simple accomplishment. Obviously, the hiring of staff is the responsibility of the top leader in the organization, which is the President or CEO. Furthermore, the Board or other key stakeholders have the responsibility of recruiting other Board members or stakeholders who have the desired leadership qualities. A major factor in the success of getting the people on board that are wanted is as much about the abilities of those individuals as the qualities of the top leadership doing the seeking. It is not likely that the "wanted" people will "want" to be associated with leaders that don't have their same qualities. From a leadership standpoint, "who you are is who you attract."[296]

On the other hand, an effective top leader will work at recruiting people who bring diversity to the workplace. Too much commonality among the staff and members of the organization can lead to a loss of innovative thinking and failure to uncover new approaches to old problems. However, those people being recruited should still be in sync with the organization's vision and believe in where the leadership wants to take them.

[294] Elwood F.Holton, and Naquin, Sharon S., editors. *Developing High-Performance Leadership Competency*. (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Communications, 2000), p. 229.
[295] Max De Pree, *Leadership Is an Art,* Max De Pree Center for Leadership, 1987.
[296] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 104.

It must also be kept in mind that the leadership potential of individuals varies considerably. People are not gifted equally with respect to their ability to lead. However, everyone can grow and develop their leadership potential to a varying extent, increasing their leadership ability.

One of the key advantages of developing leaders internally is that they achieve productivity almost 50 percent faster than new hires.[297] This is particularly true for organizations in which knowledge of the internal politics and structures are required to get the job done.[298] Additionally, promoting leadership development to lower levels of the organization also has a positive impact on morale and therefore assists in employee retention.[299]

The identification of leadership gaps is both an assessment of the individuals and the readiness of the organization. In order to evaluate potential leaders within the organization, a leadership program needs to identify the expected leadership skills and competencies. Once those are identified, competency models can be used to identify leadership potential during performance review and career counseling sessions. To help fully determine leadership gaps, organizations should:

1. Determine current and future leadership requirements.
2. Compare those requirements to the current leadership team.
3. Identify current leaders who may be at risk.
4. Identify succession plans for those at risk or planning to leave.
5. Look at the leadership development pipeline.
6. Identify gaps in skills and time required to fill those gaps.[300]

Once the employees with leadership potential have been identified, a skills roadmap should be developed for them. Because people learn and develop new skills both inside and outside the classroom, a development program needs to support both traditional and non-traditional learning. An aggressive approach to learning needs to be an integral part of the culture of the organization. When those involved with the organization know that

[297] Mellon Financial Corporate Learning Curve Research Study.
[298] Taleo Research White Paper, "Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development." p. 10.
[299] Best in Class Talent Management Metrics, Aberdeen Group, 2008.
[300] Taleo Research White Paper, "Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development." p. 12.

personal growth and leadership development are valued, supported, and rewarded, the stage is set for attracting high achievers and people with great potential.[301]

To support less formal learning, activities such as coaching, mentoring, rotational assignments, job shadowing, mentor relationships, and project leadership should also be part of an employee's development plan. Certainly, on-the-job learning and social networking tools should be incorporated into the development process.[302]

Leadership development is a critical aspect of continuously increasing output from organizational talent management and requires the effective execution of many talent management practices. The benefits of an effective leadership program include:

1. A pipeline of leadership talent.
2. Talent aligned to the organization's goals.
3. Improved staff morale.
4. Increased retention.
5. Improved leadership skills throughout the organization.
6. Consistent measurement through development and performance management.[303]

All organizations need strong leaders to be successful. Talent management practices can effectively identify and develop—from all levels of the staff—the leaders who will best drive organizational performance.

## Building Volunteer Leadership in the Organization

Leadership training for the organization should not be limited to just staff, if possible. Russell Willis Taylor, president and CEO of National Arts Strategies stated that *our evaluations have shown us that training teams is more effective than training individuals and that involving board members is essential if*

[301] John C. Maxwell. *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.* Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007. p. 34.
[302] Taleo Research White Paper, "Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development." p. 16.
[303] Taleo Research White Paper, "Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development." p. 19.

*the change is going to persevere*. Programs to develop leadership should be designed to ensure that learning and leadership capabilities are diffused throughout the organization.

Following up on that thought, most economic development organizations and chambers of commerce rely on volunteers for some aspect of their work. Integrating volunteers into the organization is often difficult and unproductive. However, the impact of these volunteers can be dramatically improved if they have leadership capabilities that foster their work as part of a well functioning team. Therefore, leadership training in the organization should give some consideration to the volunteers as well as staff.

Certainly, volunteers need to understand that they are sacrificing some of their time, talent, and resources to be involved with the organization. On the other hand, the possibilities of gain for both the community and the individual leader should also be demonstrated clearly, and not limited to financial benefits. According to Harry Clark, a former economic development professional: *If it were possible to make an inventory of dedicated volunteer efforts in the industrial development field, it is doubtful that ½ of 1 percent of the population of any area could be described as having the necessary motivation. Yet, even this small number, where it does exist, supplies the leadership to guide and direct the less motivated and dedicated volunteers to sometimes phenomenal action.*[304]

It is certainly important to identify the leaders that should be involved in the local economic development program, but it is equally important to consider the qualities of the volunteers. The most helpful will be those individuals who:

- Are personally interested in economic development
- Are or will be affected by the development activities (i.e., stakeholders)
- Have knowledge of the community and its economic potential
- Will communicate with others in the community during their time of service

[304] Clark, Harry W. "The Roles of the Professional and the Volunteer in Industrial Development," *AIDC Journal*, October 1969, page unnumbered.

- Are committed to assisting the economic development organization or to getting involved in its various programs
- Are willing to support change, if change is necessary
- Have a positive attitude and are enthusiastic about participating
- Are able to work well with others

Board Members

Board members certainly fall into the category of volunteers. One of the most important roles that leaders in a community can play is membership on the Board of Directors of the local Chamber or economic development organization. However, the Board should be an integral part of the organization rather than only a group to whom the executive director reports periodically. The skills and contacts of these leaders usually can offer a great deal toward implementing the economic development program.

Although many board members are leaders in their own right, some of them may lack the leadership skills necessary to function effectively as the member of an economic development organization board. They may be used to being the "boss" leader in their company or organization rather than the enabling leader needed in order for the development organization to achieve excellence. Or they may have moved into their outside position through seniority and the "Peter Principle" is applicable. As has been pointed out a number of times in this book, being in management doesn't necessarily translate to being an effective leader.

It is important for the effectiveness of the organization that the Board understands that its primary responsibilities are to set policy and evaluate results. They should not take an active role in the day-to-day implementation of that policy ("micro-management"), which is strictly a staff function. A more detailed discussion on the role of the Board, how it is selected, and how it functions is found in the book *Managing for Excellence* previously written by this author.

## Advisory Councils

Another way to involve local leaders is to enlist their participation in various organizational advisory councils. These are frequently formed by organizations to encourage input and support of their programs. Community colleges and vocational schools may set up advisory groups for each of their curriculum or training areas, enlisting representatives of local firms. Local government agencies may establish private sector advisory boards. Economic development organizations may use them for obtaining advice on a variety of key program areas.

Although advisory councils can be helpful in providing insight and a forum for ideas, it is difficult to sustain interest in participating in such a group. Busy leaders may tire of being part of something that is merely advisory. Furthermore, the advice given might not be heeded by the organization to which it is given, which is frustrating to the giver. As a caution, advisory councils can become public forums for airing grievances, without a mechanism to address these issues systematically.

## Task Forces

A higher and more sustained level of involvement of the leadership can occur through establishing committees or task forces to deal with specific aspects of economic development. They are called task forces because their assignment is usually focused on a "task" or area of need, and generally members are appointed for a specific and reasonable length of time. Task forces can present an opportunity to incorporate the expertise and interest of leaders and volunteers into productive channels of activity through direct membership in or consultation to the task force.

Enthusiasm for being on a task force can be much higher if the members know they have been carefully selected and are made to feel that their participation is an honor as well as an important contribution. A task force approach provides the advantages of:

- Concentrated study within a designated time frame;
- Group validity and empowerment – a task force study is often

given entrée not extended to an individual; and,

- Network mobilization – an enthusiastic task force member will communicate the activities of the task force within his or her network of influence.

The task forces can involve technical analysis to diagnose a problem and evaluate alternative ways of addressing it, such as figuring out how to fund a speculative industrial building. To that end, they may employ consultants, form sub-groups, or seek information from subject matter experts. They can also facilitate consensus-building among participants and educate them about specific aspects of economic development. These task forces may take on a variety of functions, including making certain kinds of studies (fact-finding committee); advising on policy, procedures, and programs (advisory); organizing meetings; and performing public relations tasks.

Typical issues of concern for task forces for an economic development program are:

- Population growth and housing availability
- Workforce development
- Stability of the local economic base (e.g., business retention and expansion)
- Land planning and environmental considerations
- Quality of life trends
- Infrastructural demands and capabilities
- Marketing strategies
- Program funding
- Development of entrepreneurial activity
- Venture capital and financial incentives

The precise size of such a group will be determined to a large extent by its purpose and the representation needed in its membership. Most task forces or committees should be comprised of less than 20 people, unless wide representation is needed. With a smaller number of people, more opportunities exist for each member to take part, and business can be handled in an informal fashion. Smaller groups tend to be flexible and can

handle delicate or controversial topics more readily. Smaller committees are also easier to assemble for meetings.

Larger task forces can be subdivided into areas of interest, and, if well-organized, have the ability to cover more territory in a shorter period of time. Larger groups can form committees and develop additional meeting schedules for hearing input, developing strategy, and making recommendations. Having a predetermined number of members helps guide the organizational process for the task force and provides a guideline for realistic achievement.

The first person selected often is the chairperson, whose particular skills should include the ability to organize the individual members into a working group. The selection of members should be based on the directives or goals outlined when the need for a task force is determined. Criteria may include interests, skills, and knowledge needed by the group; access to information and resources; and representation of organizations, geographic areas, community groups, and diverse viewpoints. The ability to provide financial support may be a consideration in some task forces.

Consideration particularly should be given to making the task force a cohesive work unit (i.e., a "team"), selecting people who work well together and choosing members the chairperson may prefer to have on the committee. It is important to develop a group that is enthusiastic, has unity of purpose, is committed to seeing things happen, and is willing to explore a number of options.

Once a decision is made to appoint a task force or committee, its overall purpose and scope should be clearly defined and understood by each member. The responsibilities of membership should be clearly stated. It is important that the members know what is expected of the group, as well as from each individual, so that they can work effectively. Appropriate reporting procedures should be specified so that the rest of the organization knows what to expect from the task force. Frequently, an economic development professional will need to serve as technical advisor and facilitator to the task force. It is important to inform the members

about how their work will be received, supported, and used.

It should be kept in mind that task forces or committees are usually not meant to be action-oriented organizations. These leadership groups are policy-makers, thinkers, and planners; they are not the doers. Their satisfaction should come from seeing things happen in the organization in which they know they had a part. Their role is to help the economic development organization:

- think through problems,
- encourage education when needed,
- determine priorities and timing,
- mobilize financial support as appropriate, and
- support and promote the plan of action.

The job of implementing the programs then falls on the governmental agencies or private sector organizations that have the assigned responsibility for these programs.

## How Do We Train New Leaders?

Leadership Development can be defined as any activity that enhances the quality of leadership within an individual or the organization. This is a competency-based development process, which means it focuses on the core skills and competencies most associated with successful leadership, including: communication, critical coaching skills (giving feedback, listening, conflict management), ability to influence others, facilitating teamwork, and creativity.[305] Previous chapters of this book identified and discussed the various key behaviors, competencies, and skills that build leadership.

Clearly, leadership development is a complex process. It involves the leaders of the organization and their followers, the unique situation of the organization, timing, resources, technology availability, the history and culture of the organization, and other various circumstances. Because

[305] http://www.mysuccesslab.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=175&Itemid=177.

circumstances and situations are in a constant state of change around us, leadership development must be a dynamic process that constantly seeks to respond to change.

In order for organizations to improve their effectiveness, the mind-set should be shifted from viewing leadership development as strictly individual development to developing an organization-wide community of leaders that learns and grows together through coursework, dialogue, mutual coaching, and accountability.[306] High performance organizations spend significantly more on training and development than typical organizations.[307]

Unfortunately, many CEOs and organizations still tend to think that people who are managed and employed and paid to do a job should do what they're told to do. We are conditioned from an early age to believe that the way to teach and train, and to motivate people towards changing what they do, is to tell them, or to persuade them. From our experiences at school we are conditioned to believe that skills, knowledge, and expectations are imposed on or "put into" people by teachers, and later, by managers and bosses in the workplace.

However, just because the CEO, or Mayor, or Governor says so, doesn't make it so. People today have a different perspective. Increasingly, just about everyone in the typical organization wants to know what is going on and wants to have some say in the functioning of the organization. The challenge is to encourage the development of leadership capacity at all levels of the organization, whether it is government or a nonprofit agency.

One important key to successful leadership development in the organization is that top management should try to know and understand each individual of the staff before attempting to develop them into leaders. It is likely that two people experiencing the same events will not necessarily become similar type leaders, depending on what they are "bringing to the table." The meaning that one attaches to work or life events is determined by that individual's perspective, and that strongly

[306] http://www.trainingmag.com/article/leadership-development-meets-teambuilding.
[307] Tom Hornsby & Larry Warkoczeksi, *New Roles for Leaders.* Franklin TN: Hillsboro Press, 2000, p. 25.

influences what he or she learns and incorporates into his/her development process. Since each person is different and has different needs and competencies, this should be strongly recognized in the leadership development process.

It should also be kept in mind that simply imposing new skills and change on people doesn't usually work because:

- It assumes that people's personal aims and wishes and needs are completely aligned with those of the organization, or that there is no need for such alignment, and
- It assumes that people want, and can assimilate into their lives, given all their other priorities, the type of development or change that the organization deems appropriate for them.

A successful leadership development program begins with the alignment of leadership development to organizational strategy and an understanding of the type of leadership style/styles needed to execute that strategy. The organization then needs to construct an incremental series of steps to meet current and future leadership needs. This comprehensive leadership development program should be systematic, involving the following:

- Recruitment of potential leaders;
- Assessments to evaluate leadership capabilities within the organization, and assessing what knowledge, skills and /or abilities are needed by learners;
- Designing the training, including identifying learning goals and associated outcomes and training methods to reach the desired outcomes;
- Developing the training methods and materials;
- Implementing the training;
- Developing an evaluation approach to manage performance in the program by monitoring and making course corrections, and to determine whether the outcomes have been reached or not;
- Succession planning to avoid leadership gaps in the future;
- Career planning to foster employee understanding of their leadership options and help them set development goals; and,

- Creating a leadership development blueprint to fill gaps in skills within the organization.[308]

The following are some basic leadership development components that might be considered in developing or modifying leadership development initiatives for the organization:[309]

- **Classroom training** -- If top management of the organization isn't careful, it will end up with just a single leadership development approach, namely, classroom training. Classroom training certainly should be used, but only as part of a larger leadership development strategy.
- **Group dialogues** -- In any developmental program, it is important to find ways to have the participants engage in useful dialogue, whether they are in the classroom, on a blog, via social media, as part of a role-play exercise, or any combination of these things. It's critical that these dialogues not become merely a group of leaders simply going through the motions of a discussion. Relevant, challenging, and engaging subjects and situations need to be provided for them to work through.
- **Mutual coaching and accountability** -- Leaders have to learn to be open and honest about their faults, and further, must learn to accept help and counsel from others. Much can be gained from having leaders discuss their struggles and weaknesses with each other and then subsequently hold each other accountable. This serves not only to improve themselves, but also to help others on the management team get better. This could be anything from specific situations that leaders are working through with their teams or the organization to leaders' personality traits or communication styles. Further, the discussion shouldn't be limited to just weaknesses. Leaders shouldn't be afraid to discuss goals and aspirations, as well, with an eye toward holding each accountable for making progress toward achieving those things.

[308] Adapted from Taleo Research White Paper, "Seven Steps for Effective Leadership Development." p. 7.
[309] http://www.trainingmag.com/article/leadership-development-meets-teambuilding.

- **Knowledge assessments** -- Where appropriate, measurements should be in place to ensure that the participants are absorbing the information they need to absorb. After all, if they're not absorbing it, it is certain they won't be sharing it and incorporating it into the operation of the organization.
- **Mentoring** – As important as the above approaches to learning are, it is a truism that "leadership is more caught than taught." That is why mentoring is so important. This can be facilitated via the two following components:

  1. The participants should team up with another leader within the organization who is down the career path a little further than they are.

  2. As the leadership development program gets going, what better way for leaders to continue to put into practice what they're learning than to have them mentor someone outside the group who they perceive to have great leadership potential? Leaders always should be looking for ways to produce and invest in other potential leaders.
- **Temporary assignments** -- Top management can also use temporary assignments as part of employee leadership development. It is most often top management who gets the requests to assign one of his or her employees to a special project or task force, who knows that someone will need to fill in for an employee on temporary leave, or who actually creates a temporary assignment in his or her group. Certainly that manager wants to assign someone who has strengths that match the requirements of the assignment, but he or she should also think through who could benefit from the challenges embedded in the assignment. Organizations can support this process by requiring regular developmental planning conversations between supervisors and employees; these conversations create space to think more systematically about the kinds of experiences an individual employee could benefit from and primes the boss to be on the look-out for these opportunities.
- **Posting leadership development opportunities** -- Organizations can also post opportunities on an internal "marketplace." These postings can include opportunities available for anyone in the organization,

such as serving on the coming year's United Way campaign organizing committee, or opportunities within a group, such as a new R&D project that needs additional assistance.

- **The cumulative effect** -- When the above components are implemented, management is doing more than simply building individual leaders across the organization. A team of leaders who are engaged with each other is being built; they're learning together, growing together, coaching each other, and holding each other accountable. A leadership team like that will prove to be an invaluable asset to any organization.

A systematic approach to leadership development should be outcome oriented (hopefully, to produce results for the organization and/or learners), with the results of each phase being being built upon for the next phase. Typically, each phase provides ongoing evaluation feedback to other phases in order to improve the overall system's process. Although growth begins inwardly, an effective leadership development program must be demonstrated to the organization through measurable performance.

Unfortunately, many leadership development programs fail to measure up to their expectations. Although much enthusiasm may accompany the initiation of such programs, in many cases the results don't last. Literally millions of dollars have been spent on leadership development programs but almost nothing on follow-up. The successful development of leadership throughout the organization will depend on asking for feedback, learning from experience and feedback, and follow-up to measure how well the program is succeeding.

Leader development efforts that produce the best leaders need senior leaders not only to plan the initiative, but also to take an active part as coaches, mentors, teachers, and, of course, as examples. It takes leaders rather than trainers or consultants to grow other leaders. Clearly, this takes a serious time commitment on the part of senior leaders to make this happen. Given that time is the most precious resource that a leader has and not budget dollars, this can require a major mindset and behavior

change. Most experienced leaders will say that the higher up they went, the more their time is occupied by meetings that "required" their presence and that the advent of e-mail and smart phones has them on a non-stop information overload tether to top management and their employees.[310] Therefore, effective leaders must learn how to set priorities and manage their time to permit opportunities for developing the organization's leadership capacity.

A second issue around the use of time for developing leaders is that most leadership development programs require the participants to be away from their real job for a period of time. This includes attending classes, taking part in projects focused on learning, being on some form of rotational or temporary assignment, etc. The issue here is that many supervisors of the participants may not have the same level of understanding or commitment as the leaders who helped design the program. A feeling of "ownership" may also exist believing that the participants are assets of their organization and work priorities come first. This mindset must change so that future leaders can be seen by the entire organization as "organizational assets" rather than the personal property of top management.[311]

## Personal Leadership Development within the Organization

Although a program of leadership development within the organization is important for building leadership capacity, personal learning is also the responsibility of each member of the organization. This is absolutely essential if a person hopes to advance within their organization. Nobody can hope to advance in their careers if they don't continuously attempt to adapt or grow to meet the challenges of new responsibilities. That is why, if you hope to expand your range of responsibilities and influence at your job, you must make it your mission to be constantly learning new things and seeking to apply those things to your work situation.

It is generally agreed that good leaders are made, not born. Growing as a leader generally requires a combination of an intentional learning

[310] http://govleaders.org/chronos.htm.
[311] http://govleaders.org/chronos.htm.

commitment and incremental leadership experience.[312] If someone has the desire and willpower, he or she can become an effective leader. However, one will not grow as a leader unless he/she commits to getting out of his/her comfort zone and tries to be a better leader than he/she is currently. Good leaders develop through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience. Effective leaders are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills; they are NOT resting on their laurels.

No one unfortunately can fully master each and every one of the attributes of an effective leader. Therefore, an individual needs to begin the leadership development process by coming to grips with the kind of leader he/she wants to be. This begins by asking such questions as:

- Who am I?
- What are my values?
- What leadership competencies and skills do I want to acquire?
- How should I proceed to move forward?

People who resist efforts to develop as leaders may be perceived as unwilling to change and to adapt to new situations. They are likely to be viewed as thinking that they are sufficient unto themselves and that adjusting to others is a sign of weakness. Those within the organization that are committed to personal growth and using that growth to advance themselves, their coworkers, and their organization is the sign of leaders who are ready to use their skills to create a more excellent organization.

Of course, the willingness to grow as a leader depends, in part, on one's willingness to honestly assess oneself. This need for and approach to self-assessment was discussed in an earlier chapter. This can be facilitated by the Johari Window (named after the first names of its inventors, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham), which is a way of describing what each of us is like, as we are known both by others and by ourselves. The four-paned "window," divides personal awareness into four different types, as represented by its four quadrants: open, blind, hidden, and unknown.

[312] John C. Maxwell, *The 5 Levels of Leadership*, New York: Center Street, 2011.

**Figure 18: The Johari Window**

| | Known to Self | Not Known to Self |
|---|---|---|
| Known to Others | Open (1) | Blind (2) |
| Not Known to Others | Hidden (3) | Unknown (4) |

The "open" window (1) is generally our most productive situation. We are aware of our capabilities, and we know that others are aware of them as well.

In the second window (2), there are failures in ourselves that others are aware of, but we are not. This can be seen in the arrogance of some individuals, who haven't come to terms with their inadequacies and behaviors that are very evident to others. The danger here is twofold: (1) without understanding where they are falling short, leaders perpetuate their poor performance, especially as it impacts others; and (2) pride and arrogance lead to greater potential failures. From this point, it is only a short and very slippery slope to more serious failures.

It is in the third window (3), where we recognize things in ourselves that others do not yet know, where failure can best be headed off early. It is in this insight into our behavior that the opportunity exists either to fail or to blossom.

Honest self-awareness in a leader should be a daily discipline. Otherwise, issues of power or the drive for results may overcome our desire to be a more enabling and effective leader. As Jim Collins observes, the best leaders look in the mirror when faced with failure and take responsibility; they don't blame others. Many have found that useful awareness comes from self-reflection and is often best practiced at the end of the day. This can be as simple as quietly reviewing your actions and relationships of the day. How often did you make the effort to serve others before yourself?

Are you beginning to feel a sense of superiority over your colleagues or your boss? Etc. This provides the foundation for beginning to work on those areas where you know you are deficient.[313]

The best way to develop as a leader is to learn by doing, such as taking a course or leading a new project at work; doing something that will push you out of your comfort zone. The leadership of an organization should ensure that each individual in the organization has opportunities to develop as a leader as part of employee development. Organizational leaders should spend a lot of time concentrating on the best ways to develop their people to their full potential. How this is most effectively accomplished will depend on the unique talents, strengths, and experiences of each individual.

One approach to self-development, besides the options previously discussed, could be to trade a responsibility with a colleague. The added bonus here is that you can serve as each other's coach as you master the new work. A second approach is to take on responsibilities that are currently "falling through the cracks," that is, work that would help your group or the organization but no one is paying attention to it. One should look for things that have become routine for top management, but would be a stretch for staff. For example, starting a formal intern program for the organization would demonstrate leadership. This could help an individual staff member learn more about work processes throughout the organization and hone his/her ability to spot and develop talent. A final strategy could be to devote more time to an aspect of your job that could be developmental if you spent more time focused on it, for example, coaching employees or negotiating with vendors. Sometimes people avoid the parts of their job that they aren't good at—a sure strategy for not improving in these areas.

Leadership capacity grows through challenges, both professional and personal. Challenge at work comes from being stretched by the assignment due to encountering new tasks, new responsibilities, increased demands, or more complex situations. Support helps people deal with the

[313] http://govleaders.org/failures.htm.

struggles of a challenging assignment. Support usually comes from coworkers, but can also come from family and friends. The individual being challenged can make the most of an assignment by creating a development plan that calls out the challenge being faced in the assignment and articulates strategies for getting the assessment and support needed to maximize learning from the assignment.[314]

Remember, personal learning isn't a sign that you are unskilled; it simply means that you are willing to constantly better yourself so that you can be more of an expert in your field and a source of inspiration to others.[315] People who embrace personal learning find that they can never be done educating themselves on how to be better at their relationships and their job, and that can lend an air of excitement to their career. Constantly challenging yourself makes you a better leader in that not only will you have more skills with which to manage your work, but it will hopefully create a culture of achievement in your workplace that everyone will try to live up to.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the top leadership of an organization clearly has to be interested in the development of his or her staff if he or she is to be transformational. A good deal of time needs to be spent observing and coaching others, and helping them set goals that stretch their capabilities. However, training leaders is not enough if the organization is to benefit from their skills and knowledge. Frequently, the comment is heard: "I spent a good deal of time and effort in this leadership training program, but I don't know what to do with what I learned." The follow-up to all of this education and training is as important as the learning process itself. The key is to determine how to most effectively involve these emerging leaders in the organization and its various processes. It is also important to have follow-up meetings with the staff to encourage and assist them in their pursuit of personal and organizational goals.

[314] http://govleaders.org/development.htm.
[315] http://www.mysuccesslab.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=160:critical-leadership-competency-personal-learning&catid=43:news&Itemid=173.

*Exercise 35: Staff Assessment of Their Leadership Capability*

*Have the staff answer individually and confidentially the following questions:*

- *What's your first inclination when you are assigned to a group project?*
- *How do you prefer to get your work done?*
- *How do you respond under pressure?*
- *How do you make a vital contribution to the group?*
- *Are you clear in your mind about the direction you wish to take?*
- *What problem do you have with those coming from other directions?*

# Chapter 12

# THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL AS LEADER

## Leader vs. Manager

> *I used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. But I don't think that's quite it; it's more like jazz. There is more improvisation*. Warren Bennis.

Both leading and managing are crucial to the success of an effective organization. In fact, one must manage effectively in order to be able to lead.[316] John Kotter, writing in his book *The Leadership Factor,* stated that organizations are facing a key challenge in this globally competitive environment because even the best "professional managers" are often ineffective because they cannot also lead.[317]

Unfortunately, it appears that many of the nation's MBA programs are focused on producing skilled managers with quantitative and management abilities, but they are not helping their students learn how to lead.[318] The same thing can probably be said of much of the training taking place in the field of economic development. Furthermore, the on-the-job experience of organizational staff also tends to foster the acquisition of management skills, providing fewer opportunities to develop leadership competencies.

In our knowledge-based economy, the focus is increasingly on the knowledge of the people in the organization. This makes it more difficult to separate management and leadership. The staff looks to their managers, not just to assign them a task, but to define their work's purpose. *Why* are they being asked to do what they do? Managers also have to organize the staff; not just to improve efficiency, but also to nurture their skills, develop their talent, and inspire results.

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[316] Richard Lynch, *Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993, p. 8.
[317] John Kotter, *The Leadership Factor*, 1988, p. 15.
[318] James F. Bolt, "Developing Three-Dimensional Leaders." Frances Hesselbein, et.al.editors. *The Leader of the Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. P. 165.

However, a very big difference between leadership and management, which is often overlooked, is that leadership always involves leading a group of people, whereas management need only be concerned with responsibility for the operation of the organization. Stephen Covey is quoted as saying that *leadership focuses on doing the right things; management focuses on doing things right.*[319] Bert Nanus has stated that: *If managers are known for their skills in solving problems, then leaders are known for being masters in designing and building institutions; they are the architects of the organization's future.*[320] Of course, many management roles have major people-management responsibilities. However, the fact that management focuses on the systems and structure of the organization, whereas leadership definitely always includes focuses on its people, is a big difference between the two concepts.

*Management is execution; leadership is inspiration.* John Baldoni.

Management involves making the organizational processes work in harmony, like planning, budgeting, assigning work, hiring staff, measuring performance, and making decisions. This all helps an organization to accomplish what is expected of it and to do so predictably. This is a very difficult task, as any manager can attest, in any size organization. The complexity of this task is constantly underestimated, especially by those not in senior management jobs.

So, management is crucial, but it's not leadership.[321] A manager who doesn't understand effective leadership will tend to be traditional and authoritarian, which leads to over-managing and a focus on control. On the other hand, leadership is possible only when the organization is managed well enough so that people can look beyond the frustration of

[319] Stephen Covey, "Three Roles of the Leader in the New Paradigm." Frances Hesselbein, et.al.editors. *The Leader of the Future*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996. P. 154.
[320] Bert Nanus. *The Leaders' Edge: The Seven Keys to Leadership in a Turbulent World.* Chicago: Contemporary Books, 1989, p. 7.
[321] John Kotter: http://blogs.hbr.org/kotter/2013/01/management-is-still-not-leadership.html?goback=%2Egde_2164533_member_203574381.

their daily routine and start to think about how they can make a difference.[322]

John Kotter, who is well-known in the field of management, is of the opinion that *there are very, very few organizations today that have sufficient leadership. Until we face this issue, understanding exactly what the problem is, we're never going to solve it. Unless we recognize that we're not talking about management when we speak of leadership, all we will try to do when we do need more leadership is work harder to manage. At a certain point, we end up with over-managed and under-led organizations, which are increasingly vulnerable in a fast-moving world.*[323]

The most important fundamental overlap between leadership and management is that good leadership always includes responsibility for managing. Lots of the managing duties may be delegated through others, but the leader is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and effective management exists for the situation or group concerned. On the other hand, effective management without effective leadership is *like straightening deck chairs on the Titanic.* No management success can compensate for failure in leadership.[324]

> *Management is efficiency in climbing the ladder of success; leadership determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall.* Stephen R. Covey in *The Seven Habits of Effective People.*

The role of the economic development professional, then, is generally one of both leader and manager. Frequently these roles can be confused, substantially reducing the effectiveness of the professional. To quote William Kirchoff, a former city manager of Arlington TX, *to achieve the organization's goals, leadership is important, but management finesse is essential*. The practitioner can clearly benefit by knowing how to operate effectively

[322] Richard Lynch, *Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993, p. 8.
[323] John Kotter: http://blogs.hbr.org/kotter/2013/01/management-is-still-not-leadership.html?goback=%2Egde_2164533_member_203574381.
[324] Stephen R. Covey. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989. P. 102.

in both venues of management and leadership. In simple terms, the skills are different, but complementary.

Management usually aims at consistency and order, whereas leadership aims at movement and change. *Leaders see the future as something to create, while traditional managers see it as something to react to.*[325] Both management and leadership are needed in the life of healthy organizations. Management alone will not bring about the substantive change that is needed in most of today's organizations. In his book, *Maximum Leadership*, Charles Farkas states: *a leader should add value, or get out of the way for someone who will.*

Warren Benis, one of the foremost experts on leadership, makes the following distinctions between managers and leaders:

- The manager administers; the leader innovates.
- The manager is a copy; the leader is an original.
- The manager focuses on systems and structure; the leader focuses on people.
- The manager relies on control; the leader inspires trust.
- The manager has a short-range view; the leader has a long-range perspective.
- The manager asks how and when; the leader asks what and why.
- The manager has his eye always on the bottom line; the leader has his eye on the horizon.
- The manager imitates; the leader originates.
- The manager accepts the status quo; the leader challenges it.
- The manager does things right; the leader does the right things.[326]

[325] Lynch, Richard. *Lead! How Public and Nonprofit Managers Can Bring Out the Best in Themselves and Their Organizations* (San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1993), p. 6.
[326] Bennis, Warren. *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading MA: Addison-Wesley, 1989), p. 45.

Figure 19: Management vs. Leadership - Differences in Responsibilities[327]

| **Typical Responsibilities** (not absolutely exclusive to either management or leadership) | |
|---|---|
| **Management** | **Leadership** |
| 1. Implementing tactical actions<br>2. Detailed budgeting<br>3. Measuring and reporting performance<br>4. Applying rules and policies<br>5. Implementing disciplinary rules<br>6. Organizing people and tasks within the organization<br>7. Recruiting people for jobs<br>8. Checking and managing ethics and morals<br>9. Developing people<br>10. Problem-solving<br>11. Planning<br>12. Improving productivity and efficiency<br>13. Motivating and encouraging others<br>14. Delegating and training | 1. Creating new visions and goals<br>2. Establishing organizational financial targets<br>3. Deciding what needs measuring and reporting<br>4. Making new rules and policies<br>5. Making disciplinary rules<br>6. Deciding structures, hierarchies, and workgroups<br>7. Creating new job roles<br>8. Establishing ethical and moral positions<br>9. Developing the organization<br>10. Problem-anticipation<br>11. Visualizing and visioning<br>12. Conceiving new opportunities<br>13. Inspiring and empowering others<br>14. Planning and organizing succession |

A community often employs an economic developer because it is seeking leadership for stimulating or directing economic growth and development. In this case, the economic developer has authority as a *positional leader*, although many of the responsibilities of the professional are task-oriented and require good managerial skills. If the community or its economic development organization is going through significant change, effective management to direct and control the response to this change is particularly critical.

[327] http://www.businessballs.com/leadership-theories.htm#leadership-introduction.

In his or her role both as manager and positional leader, the economic development practitioner may simply need to coordinate and help facilitate mobilization of leadership if the existing leadership base is adequate. It is the effective facilitation of activities and the management of programs that usually determines how well the practitioner is ultimately is accepted as a leader. The developer as a leader should know when to take the lead, when to learn from other leaders, and when to bring in other leaders. An organization's leader is certainly more effective over the long term by assigning appropriate tasks and projects to staff and other administrative support personnel, and helping them develop their own leadership capacity.

Success for the manager of an organization is usually determined on the basis of short-term accomplishments, while success for local leaders is more likely to be measured by the long-term improvements in the community. In any case, the practitioner has an opportunity to have a favorable impact on the community by cultivating existing leadership and developing potential leaders. *Professional economic developers know that a town with few advantages, but which has good leadership, will be more successful than a good town with no leadership*.[328]

Within the development organization, the executive director also must serve as leader to the staff. In that capacity, he/she should encourage them through feedback, coaching, reward systems, and building employee commitment.[329] The integration of these elements is a critical task that the leader of the organization must understand and perform. The rewards to employees can be as simple as praise and as complicated as performance bonus systems. The benefits of rewards are best realized when they are aligned with both the culture of the organization and the needs of the employees. The use of feedback and coaching by the executive director provides employees with information that will help them reach their full potential.[330]

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[328] Williams, Malcolm. "Leadership – The Key to Economic Development," *Economic Development Review*, V8N3, (Summer 1990): 4-6.
[329] Locke, E. *The Essence of Leadership: Four Keys to Leading Successfully.* San Francisco CA: New Lexington Press, 1991.
[330] Holton, Elwood F., and Naquin, Sharon S., editors. *Developing High-Performance Leadership Competency* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler Communications, 2000), p. 78.

The leader of an organization has to continuously redefine it in terms of its purpose and values if the organization is to continue to be relevant and thereby effective. By taking on the responsibility for redefining the organization, the leader has the opportunity to position it to continue to thrive long after he/she passes from the scene.

John Kotter summarizes the need for improved understanding of the concepts of management and leadership with the following statement: *Some people still argue that we must replace management with leadership. This is obviously not so: they serve different, yet essential, functions. We need superb management. And we need more superb leadership. We need to be able to make our complex organizations reliable and efficient. We need them to jump into the future – the right future – at an accelerated pace, no matter the size of the changes required to make that happen.*

*There are very, very few organizations today that have sufficient leadership. Until we face this issue, understanding exactly what the problem is, we're never going to solve it. Unless we recognize that we're not talking about management when we speak of leadership, all we will try to do when we do need more leadership is work harder to manage. At a certain point, we end up with over-managed and under-led organizations, which are increasingly vulnerable in a fast-moving world.*[331]

The degree to which one leads or manages within the organization varies, depending on where one is situated in the organization. The CEO is likely to focus more on leading than will division leaders or other staff. On the other hand, division leaders tend to spend a greater share of their time on managing, since they have the responsibility of implementing existing tasks on a day-to-day basis. A self-test that looks at one's tendency to manage vs. lead is found at: http://www.bumc.bu.edu/facdev-medicine/files/2010/10/Leadership-Matrix-Self-Assessment-Questionnaire.pdf.

[331] http://blogs.hbr.org/kotter/2013/01/management-is-still-not-leadership.html?goback=%2Egde_2164533_member_203574381.

## Leadership and Accountability

Leaders in an organization have to assume responsibility for the performance of the people for whom they have responsibility. Harry Truman had a sign on his desk that said, *the buck stops here.* This means that leaders need to monitor their people's progress, give them direction, and hold them accountable.

Achieving balance between empowerment and accountability is not easy. Unfortunately, "the empowerment stream can become a muddy creek in no time," leading to conflict, apathy, and/or the decrease in empowerment. The concept of empowerment can be easily misunderstood and can be poorly administered in organizations that ultimately mean well. According to the World Bank, empowerment can be defined as *the process of increasing the assets and capabilities of individuals or groups to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes*.[332] Accountability can be defined as being held answerable for outcomes.

The value of empowering employees includes the following:

- Because management cannot see everything that is going on in the organization, they need help and lots of it.
- Because even if management could see everything, they would not have enough time to fix everything on their own.
- Because we are wasting valuable experience and intelligence if we don't leverage the knowledge and creativity of the organization's most important resource, which is its people.[333]

The failure to empower employees would be an unfortunate circumstance that could drain organizational resources and leadership vitality. As leaders are being developed in the organization, the effort should be made to provide greater amounts of freedom simultaneous to ensuring the appropriate levels of accountability. Empowerment without accountability is likely to lead to organizational chaos.

[332] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTPOVERTY/EXTEMPOWERMENT/0,,contentMDK:20272299~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:486411~isCURL:Y~isCURL:Y,00.html.
[333] http://leanthinkingnetwork.org/2011/10/20/e2-2-empowerment-and-accountability/.

Empowerment may be misunderstood, but accountability is sometimes considered the thing that holds leaders back. Without accountability within the organization, the top executive ends up being the only one held accountable. People generally want to be accountable, but they want it to be fair and parallel to empowerment.

Like the empowerment stream, accountability also flows through an organization from top to bottom. A board defines what it wants the top management to achieve; subsequently management works with its staff to develop goals and measurable outcomes. Giuliani in his book entitled *Leadership* states that nothing builds a stronger case for holding employees to a high standard than a leader who holds himself to even higher standards.[334]

The tools of empowerment are similar to those for accountability, which are goal setting, performance monitoring, and allowing for creativity within the confines of policy. In reality, you can't have empowerment without accountability. Responsibility and authority go hand in hand. If a team or organization has full responsibility then it has to have full authority. Micromanaging will destroy empowerment.

When people believe that they are accountable, they take more ownership for their results; when they feel that they are at the mercy of leaders, they tend to blame things outside themselves for their results. For that reason, accountability is the key to effective empowerment, which is all about getting the results you want while working toward the results the organization needs and wants.

In order to hold someone accountable certain conditions have to be met, including:

- Understanding and agreeing on expectations
- Training to do the job
- Follow up and assessment of performance
- Ongoing feedback and consequences

[334] Rudolph W. Guiliani, *Leadership*, New York: Miramax Books, 2002, p. 70.

It's often easier to agree to expectations when someone is newly hired—systems are usually in place for that. But if an employee is being promoted from within the organization, the assumption often exists that the person already knows what the expectations will be. This can result in a potential lack of empowerment and accountability. As peers move into a lead or supervisor role they have to understand and agree that their new role will include a different relationship with their former peers.[335]

Regular check-ins with staff does not have to be the same as micromanagement. Done correctly, it is a way of saying "I care how you are doing." A simple questions such as "What is one thing you need to be more productive in your work?" can get them thinking about doing better and improving productivity. The next question could then be "What are three things you are willing to do to get what you have requested?" This leads to increased understanding of their role and responsibility.

Unfortunately, busy managers might be tempted to skip checking in regularly with their staff, reserving feedback for more structured performance evaluations. However, being in regular contact helps each party stay in agreement regarding expectations and keeps them in mind in their daily work. It also stimulates two-way communication and relationship building, and ensures transparency and knowledge sharing. Clearly, this type of feedback promotes empowered and productive employees.

When there is poor performance on someone's part, accountability should come with consequences. However, it can usually be more effective if accountability results in rewards and recognition. Research demonstrates that people respond more positively to praise than to the fear of condemnation.

[335] CDS Consulting Co-op, Daily Operations: Fostering Staff Empowerment and Accountability. http://www.cdsconsulting.coop/newsletter/article/891.

## Facilitator and Consensus-Builder

The ability of an economic development professional to function effectively within the organization depends to a great degree on how well the professional's style of leadership can be merged with the expectations of existing leaders of that organization as well as those of the larger community. Ideally, the expectations of both parties should be compatible, if not identical.

The economic developer will more closely meet the expectations of local leadership if he or she serves more as a facilitator and coordinator than as a "boss." The facilitator must listen carefully to the desires of the local leaders, probing relentlessly, but gently, to discover their hopes and agendas. With a clear understanding of the motivation of the leaders, the economic developer must cautiously pull these divergent "visions" in line with mutually agreed upon realistic possibilities. Success in economic development for the community is the marriage of varying expectations to economic and societal reality.

Ultimately, local leadership should perceive that the economic developer is helping them achieve their expectations, even if that means that the professional assists them in formulating more attainable goals. This perception will encourage the leaders to accept the recommendations and suggestions of the professional, which will result in a more favorable environment for developing a consensus about the direction of the development program.

Once general agreement is reached as to the nature and direction of the program, the economic developer should become a catalyst for action, moving to the implementation stage. A clear statement of organizational goals and outcomes facilitates the designing and carrying out of those strategies that will accomplish them. During the implementation of various planned activities it becomes clear as to whether or not the program has been well designed, or the organization's resources are adequate, or the expectations are appropriate. Leaders are now in a position to evaluate and to hold the economic developer accountable for the results, or lack of

them. Demonstrable successes become critical.

In summary, the economic development professional plays a crucial leadership role in developing local consensus or agreement regarding the goals and outcomes of the economic development program. In the implementation stage, the economic developer serves as a catalyst to the program, and must demonstrate strong management skills to ensure that the program is carried out as cost-effectively as possible.

## The Practitioner as Educator

Frequently, the economic developer must also play the role of a group educator, and this appears to be a leadership role in which the professional should excel. Usually the local leaders in a community have an awareness of the economic development process and its various dimensions, but do not feel competent to implement and direct this process. If these leaders are to make their fullest contribution, however, they need to understand economic development and the role that they play in making it happen. It usually falls upon the shoulders of the local economic development professional to fill this knowledge void, but, unfortunately, in many communities this void continues.

Planning a leadership education program should begin far in advance. The growing complexity of local economic development is making it all the more necessary to provide local stakeholders with current and relevant information as well as an understanding of how to best use that information. The economic developer must also keep in mind that his/her constituency is both the economic development organization and the general community. Opportunities should be created for people to attend forums, participate in workshops, watch relevant and enlightening programs on local cable, etc. As training and education occur, the base of willing and educated participants who can lead the process grows. This, in turn, increases the support for and the participation level in the development process.

Educating local leaders is only one aspect of the need for the economic

development organization to foster learning. In fact, the organization that is likely to be successful in the future might be called the "learning organization." *The ability to learn faster than your competitors may be the only sustainable competitive advantage*, according to Arie De Geus, head of planning for Royal Dutch/Shell. The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be those that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at *all* levels in an organization.[336] Therefore, one of the core competencies of effective leaders is the ability to develop other leaders that are engaged in the organization.[337] This process was covered in Chapter 11.

When an organization shares a genuine vision, people excel and learn. This is not because they are told to, but because they want to. In learning organizations, leaders are *responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, . . . that is, they are responsible for learning*.[338] The organization leader, or executive director, should take on the responsibility for designing the learning process, maintaining that process over time, and leading people through that process.

## The Economic Developer as Community Leader

Local leaders, recognizing a lack of critical expertise and experience in economic development matters, turn to those individuals who have the necessary background and skills to assist in improving the local economic situation. Typically, they hire a "paid expert" or "outside" professional as executive director of the economic development organization.

Try as one might, the economic developer usually remains somewhat the outsider in the community. This is often demonstrated when the professional executive loses his or her job, and is no longer perceived as a credible leader. Many professionals are too mobile to spend the necessary

[336] Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline:: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), p. 4
[337] Tichy, N.M. *The Leadership Engine: How Winning Companies Build Leaders at Every Level*. New York: HarperBusiness, 1997.
[338] Senge, Peter M. *The Fifth Discipline:: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (New York: Doubleday, 1990), p. 340.

amount of time in a community to become accepted leaders in their own right. Furthermore, if the economic developer occupies a public sector position, the role of leader will be subordinated to that of the mayor or city manager.

One way to predict if the economic developer will be given the opportunity to become an accepted leader in the community is by advocating that he or she be a voting member of the Board of Directors and/or its Executive Committee. The dialogue on this suggestion will usually be quite revealing. Traditionally, the executive director is either not a member of the Board or holds ex officio status. If the Board approves the suggestion, it shows a degree of respect to the professional. It is clearly a compliment and shows genuine interest in parity.

Conversely, a negative response makes an important statement, but this should be viewed cautiously. A number of very valid reasons could exist for this decision. One should listen very attentively to any discussion among the Board regarding this point to help interpret expectations of the leadership about the economic developer.

It is sometimes difficult for the Board of Directors of the organization to determine whether the practitioner should assume the role as chief executive officer (CEO) of the organization as opposed to chief operating officer (COO), an important distinction. Often, representatives of expanding or relocating companies prefer to deal with a CEO, knowing that such a title should represent ultimate responsibility and authority (within the policy limits established by the Board of Directors of the organization).

Regardless of whether the economic developer is a CEO or not, it should be very clear as to which person within the organization is the spokesperson for the group and its programs. Many times it is appropriate for the professional to assume this position, but it is often much more effective in the long term to have key volunteer leaders perform this function. Since the economic developer usually has the most expertise in specific issues facing the organization, it is very important that the volunteer be fully

briefed before speaking publicly.

Ultimately, the determination of who should carry out the policies of the organization rests on the shoulders of the Board of Directors and its executive committee. The Board is the governing entity and the practitioner is employed by it to carry out its policies. When the economic developer can no longer do this to the satisfaction of either party or both parties, it is probably time to consider moving on.

Patient coalition-building, altering agendas so that new priorities get appropriate and adequate attention, being visible when things aren't going the way they are expected to, and being willing to give credit to others when programs are working well are all requirements of the executive director. It also is necessary to build a loyal team that speaks more or less with one voice, listens carefully, speaks with encouragement, and reinforces words with believable action ("walk the talk"). It means taking risks when necessary, being willing to innovate and experiment in order to find new and better ways of doing things, being forceful when necessary, having a greater concern for results than for the safety of status quo, and the willingness to take responsibility for failures when necessary.[339]

Most importantly, the economic development professional should involve the community's leadership in the economic development process and should be a catalyst for action. Probably the most valuable duty that the economic developer has to perform is to discover, inspire, stimulate, develop, and train voluntary leaders to become more effectively engaged in the local economic development process.

[339] Peters, Thomas J. & Waterman, Robert H. *In Search of Excellence* (New York NY: Warner Books, 1982), p. 82.

# Chapter 13

# CONCLUSIONS

> *For in the end, it is impossible to have a great life unless it is a meaningful life. And it is very difficult to have a meaningful life without meaningful work. Perhaps, then, you might gain that rare tranquility that comes from knowing that you've had a hand in creating something of intrinsic excellence that makes a contribution. Indeed, you might even gain that deepest of all satisfactions knowing that your short time here on this earth has been well spent, and that it mattered.* Jim Collins.

After considerable research on the topic of effective leadership and building leadership capacity, the conclusion of this author is that the key is focusing on results and performance rather than on self-interest and self-gratification. Getting results, however, also involves expending energy on relationships within the organization, for it takes "a village" to accomplish its goals and strategies. It is about striving to make a positive difference in the organization so that the organization can make a positive difference in the community or region it serves.

Effective leadership is also less about learning "techniques" and more about building character. As stated by Frances Hesselbein: *The leader for today and the future will be focused on <u>how to be</u> – how to develop quality, character, mind-set, values, principles, and courage.*[340] Strong leaders will be visionary, with a belief that they can and should be shaping the future. And, they will act on those beliefs by "walking the talk."

> *Here lies a man who attracted better people into his service than he was himself.* Andrew Carnegie's epitaph.

A final thought from a quote by David Mahoney: *Success is not so much achievement as achieving. Refuse to join the cautious crowd that plays not to lose; play to win.*

[340] Frances Hesselbein, "The 'How to Be' Leader," *The Leader of the Future.* San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996, p.122.

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